

AN
ANSWER
TO

Mr Shaw's Inquiry

INTO THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE
POEMS ascribed to OSSIAN.

By JOHN CLARK,

TRANSLATOR OF THE CALEDONIAN BARDS, AND MEMBER
OF THE SOCIETY OF SCOTS ANTIQUARIES.

Impudens, impurus, inverecundissimus. PLAUT.

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TO THE REV^D. MR WILLIAM SHAW.

SIR,

CONSIDERING our former intimacy, you will, no doubt, be surpris'd to receive a Letter from me which has undergone the formality of a squeeze in the press. That surpris'e, however, can hardly equal mine on reading your late publication, entitled "An Inquiry into the Authenticity of the Poems ascribed to Ossian."

Astonishing as it must appear to the Highlanders, the existence of their poetry is not a new subject of controversy among strangers. That littleness of soul, which gives birth to national prejudice, has thrown its illiberal veil over the accustomed penetration and equity of our friends in the South. The intimacy of the Highlanders with these poems, placed the subject in so clear and self-evident a point of view, that it required a more eminent degree of coolness, than that which marks their national character, to argue with temper upon it.

The days of miracles are with the years that are past. The knowledge of languages is not to be acquired instantaneously. The Highlanders found, however, that nothing less would convince their neighbours of the existence of their poetry. They were therefore under the necessity of sitting down contented with one substantial consolation, that they

knew themselves entitled to an honour which strangers could not believe due to them.

Had matters continued in this situation, neither the public nor you would have been troubled with any remarks of mine on the subject, as it requires a degree of ability of which I am not possessed, to convince prejudiced minds of the existence of any thing which they confess they cannot perceive. Suppose a blind man, through some whim or prejudice, should take it into his head that no such colour as red existed, and that the British troops were all clothed in black; whoever would attempt to convince him of his mistake, would certainly be at a loss for arguments. If forty thousand witnesses were produced to authenticate the fact, the blind man would answer, That all the seeing part of mankind had entered into a combination to impose on him, and that he was determined not to believe one of them.

The subject now, however, Sir, wears a different aspect. You have for some years made repeated attempts to pass for a man of Celtic literature. Your supposed acquaintance with the subject has therefore provoked a reply, which has been withheld from those, who in other respects must be considered as your superiors.

A native of the Highlands is the only person who could force me to enter the rugged paths of controversy on this subject. I therefore little expected that so ungracious a task should ever have fallen to my share: but you have dragged me into a contest, the issue of which you will probably have little reason to boast of. I enter upon it, however, without feeling any emotions of that diffidence and timidity, which

I have experienced in every other literary essay. Brilliancy of talents, and extensive penetration, are not necessary for the present undertaking. The cause of truth is simple and uniform. Before impartial judges it can be sufficiently supported by a feeble advocate; and readers of a different description I neither mean to address nor regard.

When I hear a person, who is unacquainted with the language, manners, and genius of the Highlanders, call in question the existence of their poetry, I can listen without being astonished, and endeavour to point out the error without being agitated: but when you, Sir, a native of the isle of Arran, a gentleman of some literary knowledge, the inventor of a Gaelic grammar, the compiler of a Gaelic dictionary, a clergyman of the established churches both of Scotland and England, sign your name to a publication, boldly asserting, that poems, which I have so often heard you rehearse and admire, never had existence; my faculties of reasoning are bewildered in confusion, and I cannot distinguish whether my astonishment or indignation predominates.

I shall admit for once, as true, what I know to be false, that your last publication is supported by truth; and yet draw conclusions, the equity of which your warmest friends will not venture to deny.

After having repeatedly, in your two first publications, enlarged on the beauty, strength, and energy of the Gaelic language, and the compositions which it contains, you have issued a third, to inform mankind that you have been imposing on them all this time; to assure them that none of these pretended beauties ever existed; and that you had prostituted

your literary honour and reputation to procure a little money. How the lovers of truth, in both nations, will view you after such a transaction, I shall not pretend to determine; but I humbly apprehend it will be with a very different sensation from that of envy.

Since, by granting you the question your own way, you would still remain in a situation very mortifying to an honest mind; I shall therefore do you all the justice in my power, by stating your actions in their true colour, and try how much that will mend the matter. In relating what has passed between us on this subject, I shall pay more regard to the simplicity of facts than to the flowers of rhetoric.

When you began your perambulation through the Highlands in search of compositions to furnish materials for a Gaelic dictionary, your literary friends in Edinburgh were very solicitous for your success, and had no doubt but you would have met with several pieces of which we had not formerly been possessed; as we knew by experience what a fertile soil you had to work upon, had you been industrious. We had soon, however, the mortification to learn from some of our correspondents in the Highlands, that subscriptions, and not ancient poetry, were the object of your attention. When you was within a small distance of Mr M'Nicol's, a gentleman told you that his knowledge in the language was extensive, his collection valuable, and his eagerness to promote every work tending to illustrate the antiquity of his native country warm and spirited; and recommended strongly to you to call upon him, and offered himself to accompany you to his friend's house. These apparently in-

viting

ving circumstances, however, could not prevail on you to see Mr M'Nicol. Time has now fully explained the cause : Mr M'Nicol was the literary opponent of Dr Johnson; you had then formed a scheme of attacking the Doctor on his weak side, by strengthening his prejudices against Scotland, in the hope of obtaining promotion in England through his interest.

When you returned to Edinburgh, I inquired with great eagerness what success you had had in collecting Gaelic poetry? you answered, Not near so much as you had expected. I expressed some surprise; and, having learned your mode of travelling, highly disapproved of it; as you had not penetrated into the interior parts of the country, but paraded before a servant along the post-roads. I remarked, that you ought to have preferred the cottage of the bard, to the palace of the chief, for a time; and asked what you was to say to the Celtic literati of London? You answered sarcastically, that you would tell them that Mr Macpherson had carried all the poetry out of the country. I replied, that when you thought proper to make such a declaration publicly, I would be ready to prove the contrary; and, that you might have no reason of pleading ignorance, I then offered to produce you natives of the Highlands residing in Edinburgh, who would rehearse Gaelic poetry for a twelve-month from memory, who were so totally illiterate, that they did not know the use of an alphabet in any language. You agreed to see some of them; I sent for Alexander Cameron, taylor, a native of Lochaber, whose mind may justly be termed a library of Celtic poetry. You stopped your intended journey

to London for some weeks; during which time this man attended you at your lodgings, rehearsing, whilst you wrote, such of the poems of Ossian as had not formerly come into your hands, for which you paid him one shilling *per* day. Now, Sir, you may look at your own subscription to a publication, boldly asserting that no such poems ever existed; and pass what compliments you think proper on yourself, as an honest man, and a preacher of the Gospel of Truth*.

Before your return to London, you discovered strong marks of being much chagrined and disappointed

* I have heard an anecdote of Mr Shaw during his late peregrination through the Highlands, which is probably better authenticated than the *facts* with which he has decorated his pamphlet. Having undertaken to preach to a congregation in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, the subject of his discourse was the uncertainty of human life. At the height of a paroxysm of rhetoric, having used the following words, or words to the same effect, "And even I who now preach to you, may be instantly called hence;" down he dropt in the pulpit! The whole congregation were surpris'd, alarmed, and affected, till it was, upon examination, found, that the whole was *mere* *action* in our inquirer. When he arriv'd at Campbeltown in Argyleshire, he attempted the same trick upon the congregation there; but, unfortunately, the fame of the former *imposture* had out-run the *impostor* himself: he was, therefore, permitted to recover at leisure of his fit; which he soon did, and, resuming his discourse, created emotions in his hearers very different from the seriousness of his subject. But though this juggling trick was only looked upon with contempt and laughter among the more enlightened part of his countrymen in the South, it was considered in a very serious view in the North; which, together with Shaw's awkward, impudent, and foolish demeanor in other respects, occasioned that cold reception which is so much the object of his resentment. All these things considered, it was no wonder that the Highlanders should depart, in regard to him, from their characteristical hospitality; and that, to use his own words, he "wandered from island to island, wet, fatigued, and uncomfortable." But they, perhaps, thought, that a man who had such a ready knack at *dying*, was indifferent about *living*.

pointed at the smallness of your list of subscribers to the Gaelic dictionary. That it was not equal to your expectation, or a proper reward for a perambulation of three thousand miles, as you assert in the preface, I shall not pretend to deny; but you ought to have remembered, that a disappointed author is not a very strange phenomenon in these days.

Irritated by disappointment, and not meeting with that encouragement to which you thought your merit entitled, you scrupled not openly to assert, That since the Highlanders would not encourage your performance, you knew well what would sell: That you were determined to write, and did not choose to exhibit where there were no spectators: That any impression of a publication denying the authenticity of Ossian's poems, and abusing the Scots, would sell in London. I desired you to reflect what an appearance you would make when your publication was proved to have truth for its opponent. You replied, that the English would never believe any such thing; and, as for the Scots, they were poor, and you did not care a farthing for them. But as this was said, as I imagined, with a view only to hum the good people of England, by proposing to gratify their prejudice against the Scots, at the expence of their own pockets, I considered them only as words of course; indeed it was not to be imagined that I could think you serious, after the repeated encomiums which I have heard you pronounce on Gaelic poetry.

In this state of mind, however, you set off for London, with an avowed intention of publishing falsehoods and imposing on the English, in the hope of ac-

quiring some interest there; being sensible you were universally hated and despised in this country.

Compelled to leave the church of Scotland, it was not to be imagined that a man of your character would find any scruples of conscience in joining the next community in which you could get money. But the venerable clergy of England have no very great reason to boast of such a convert.

I must here pay a compliment to your ingenuity at the expence of your integrity, by acknowledging that you have adopted the most prudent plan possible for a man in your situation. You was intimately acquainted with Dr Johnson; you knew his prejudices against Scotland, and the keen animosity which subsists between him and Mr Macpherson; you attacked the Doctor on his weak side, and obtained a complete victory over him.

I would not be ready to suspect that the Author of the Rambler could support a falsehood, knowing it to be such. But the sturdiest moralist is seldom possessed of fortitude totally to reject what he earnestly wishes to be true. Had your averments in this pamphlet really been supported by truth, the Doctor would have had great merit in protecting one whose love of truth had gained a victory over the *amor patriæ*. He, however, perhaps thought them so; the integrity of his intentions in that case was equally laudable. The Doctor's great learning and genius are sufficient to cover a multitude of little foibles: I cannot therefore help expressing my astonishment at your insolence, in making him the butt of your buffoonry; and imposing on him under the mask of friendship, on purpose to induce him to provide for
you.

you. Such being avowedly your intentions, I hope to acquire some merit with the Doctor for opening his eyes to the imposture. If he will attend to the authorities which I shall produce, I have no doubt of convincing him that you have followed the constant practice of every cringing sycophant, by whispering into your patron's ear, not what you knew to be true, but what you imagined would please him.

Such, to my certain knowledge, are the motives which induced you to undertake your late publication. As I am fully convinced every page is written in direct opposition to the firm established conviction of your own mind, the recollection of our former intimacy was too feeble to oppose the duty which I owe to truth, my native country, and my own moral character, by allowing such falsehoods to pass undetected.

I am, Sir,

EDINR. }
Oct. 18. 1781. }

Your former correspondent,

JOHN CLARK.

A N

A N S W E R

T O

MR SHAW'S INQUIRY.

MR WILLIAM SHAW, author of the “Inquiry into the Authenticity of the Poems ascribed to Ossian,” is a native of the isle of Arran, where a dialect of the Gaelic tongue is used, so corrupt in the words, and so vicious in the pronunciation, as to be almost unintelligible in the other Western Islands and opposite continent of the Highlands, where the language is spoken with elegance and purity. Having obtained the common education given to persons intended for being ministers of the church of Scotland, he was admitted a clergyman in that church; and because he had no immediate chance of a living in it, he went to London, where he was employed for some time by a merchant, a native of Scotland, in the tuition of his children. During the time Mr Shaw was thus employed, he turned his thoughts to the making some figure in Gaelic literature, as the means of recommending himself to the patronage of some of his countrymen who had ecclesiastical preferments in the Highlands to bestow. He accordingly published proposals for printing by subscription a grammar of the Gaelic language; and, through the support of some gentlemen

gentlemen, natives of the Highlands, resident in London, obtained a considerable number of subscribers. This circumstance encouraged him to propose to write a dictionary of the Gaelic; a work much wanted, and desired, by the admirers of that ancient tongue.

But when the grammar, written by Mr Shaw, made its appearance in public, it was soon perceived, that, from his ignorance in the first principles of the language, nothing was to be expected from a dictionary composed by such unskilful hands. His Highland patrons in London became, therefore, indifferent about the proposed work, and the subscription for the dictionary went on very languidly and coldly. Mr Shaw, however, having left the service in which he was employed in England, resolved to make a tour through the Highlands of Scotland to obtain subscribers. Unluckily for his project, the *reputation* of his grammar had run before his application for patronage to his dictionary; and the former was by no means calculated to procure encouragement to the latter. Besides, the manners of the man were not such as were requisite to gain the friendship or esteem of those to whom he applied; he therefore met with very little success in his journey. His professed design to rescue what he called *the dying language of his country*, recommended him, however, to a nobleman in the North, so far as to obtain from him the presentation to a living in the Highlands, of about 50l. yearly value.

Mr Shaw having entered on the functions of his ministry, soon found that he was by no means agreeable to his parishioners. His forward manner, and
uncouth

uncouth address, gave disgust to many; whilst the provinciality of his dialect rendered his discourses almost unintelligible to all. Under such circumstances, it is natural to suppose he soon became tired of his new preferment; and he returned to London, where he resumed the plan of his dictionary, which he had in a manner laid aside on account of the very little encouragement he received for the prosecution of his design. He applied to the Highland Society in London for their support; which they collectively refused, both from their opinion of Mr Shaw's want of abilities and knowledge for such a work, and that some gentlemen of talents in Scotland had undertaken to write a dictionary of the Gaelic, that would merit, in every way, their patronage. Some individuals, however, gave their names to Mr Shaw, which enabled him to print a book which he called a *Galic dictionary*.

When the book, under the name of the *Galic dictionary*, was published, it evidently appeared, that the distrust generally entertained of Mr Shaw's abilities and knowledge was perfectly well-founded. Instead of adhering to the dialect spoken in the Highlands of Scotland, he had thrown into his work all the words he could collect from vocabularies of the different dialects of the Celtic, particularly that which is used in Ireland. To give an appearance of novelty to his book, he seems to have coined many words, to be met with in no dialect whatsoever of any language either ancient or modern. Upon the whole, there perhaps never appeared a work so unworthy of, or so unlike, its title; for there are whole pages of Mr Shaw's dictionary which do not contain three
words

words anywise similar to the Scotch Gaelic. The imposition, in short, was so glaring and impudent, that the author fell at once under the contempt and ridicule of every man conversant in the Gaelic who was at the trouble of examining his book.

Disappointment and resentment operated very powerfully on Mr Shaw's mind. His hopes of patronage in Scotland had been extinguished. He had quarrelled with his parishioners; and a living of fifty pounds a-year was not sufficient to gratify his ambition and pride. He therefore resolved to quit the church of Scotland entirely, and to take orders in that of England. As he had failed in his attempt to flatter Scotch *vanity*, he resolved to convert English *prejudice* to his own advantage, by *unsaying* and *unwriting* what he had *said* and *written* in favour of the ancient poetry and language of his native country.

The colouring of the above picture of Mr Shaw is neither overcharged, nor are the features of his conduct misrepresented; as is well known to many hundreds of persons of credit both in England and in Scotland. Without such a detail of facts, it would be difficult to explain to the reader what motives could induce a man to deviate, as much as Mr Shaw will appear to have done, not only from truth, but from his own former written, printed, and published declarations. The fact is, that he himself had the folly to declare to several persons, That as there was no sale for Gaelic literature, he would write something against that literature, which he was certain would sell; and that so he would receive from the prejudices of the English, what the generosity of his countrymen the
Scotch

Scotch had denied. This circumstance, joined to the vanity of being patronised by Dr Johnson, whose inveteracy to the translator of Ossian's poems is unconquerable, led our *worthy clergyman* astray from the direct track of truth, to the devious paths of malignant fiction and unauthorised romance.

Having premised these facts, I shall now proceed to the investigation and detection of the various falsehoods scattered up and down through Mr Shaw's pamphlet. In almost every page, he gives us a piece of intelligence which might have been delivered once for all, viz. That Mr Macpherson had imposed upon the public, by giving his own compositions in English as translations from the Gaelic language:—That the Highlanders of every denomination endeavoured to support the imposition:—That the principal men of character and learning in the Highlands had signed their names to a falsehood, and got Dr Blair to write in defence of it: and—That every Scotchman loves his country better than truth.

In place of taking up the reader's time with an ostentatious display of argument, or a critical minuteness in tracing out the contradictions in this pamphlet, concerning the translations from the Gaelic published by Mr Macpherson, I shall simply narrate what consists with my own personal knowledge on this subject.

The epic poems of Fingal and Temora I have never heard rehearsed by any *single* Highlander, in the same arrangement in which Mr Macpherson has published them. By *different* persons I have frequently heard almost every passage in these two poems, with no more difference from the translation than what the
genius

genius of the language required, and not near so much as there is between the different editions of these poems in the different parts of the Highlands. This variation was well accounted for by Mr Shaw himself, before he thought it his interest to disguise the truth †.

The Highlanders who rehearse these poems at present, divide them into as many different pieces, as Mr Macpherson has divided them into books. As his search after ancient poetry has been many years prior to mine, he might have found persons who could rehearse more of these two poems than I have: or, whether he has found manuscripts containing them, or introduced the episodes from different pieces of Gaelic composition, I shall not pretend to say. But this I can aver, that they are familiar to the Highlanders, although not in the direct arrangement in which he has placed them. He might, however, have collected them from different persons, and exercised his own judgment afterwards in joining them, without being either branded with the appellation of a forger himself, or those, who gave their testimony to what they knew to be true, stigmatized with collusion and imposture.

From these circumstances, however, our inquirer has taken the liberty of drawing very unwarrantable inferences. Although he uniformly pronounces every
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† “ This (the variation of measure) is easily accounted for, by shewing that all compositions have hitherto been orally repeated, which by different persons will ever be differently performed; whereas, had these pieces been written, every one would have repeated them alike. Even OSSIAN'S POEMS could not be scanned; for every reciting bard pronounced some words differently, and sometimes substituted one word for another.”

paragraph, not only of Mr Macpherson, but of every other translator from the Gaelic, to be an imposition; yet the poems of Fingal and Temora, are those which he seems particularly to strike at. Mr Shaw says, “ Many were the thorough sceptics as to the poems “ of Fingal and Temora,” p. 2. “ Ossian, who was “ a real character, although not the author of Mr “ Macpherson’s Fingal and Temora,” p. 61. “ Were “ I to call upon him (Mr Smith) to produce the “ Gaelic of any forty lines, in either Fingal or ‘Te- “ mora, he could not produce them,” p. 42.

The variation we have spoken of in the arrangement of these two poems, is all the foundation Mr Shaw had for the present publication. How far it can operate towards a total annihilation of the Gaelic poetry now existing in the Highlands, shall be left to the public to determine.

Had our author attacked Mr Macpherson in a proper manner, and where he was really liable to some degree of censure, he would have met with my most hearty concurrence. Had he informed the public of what he has often acknowledged to me in private, that the translator of Ossian has really curtailed and left out a great part of those poems which he has introduced as episodes, he would then have spoken the language of an honest man, and asserted what he well knows himself, and a thousand others can prove. The Maid of Creca, for example, an episode in Fingal, in my possession, is a large complete poem of itself, and extends to some hundred lines, all which are omitted in the translation.

So much did Mr Shaw lament the curtailing of these poems, that he pressed me to print proposals for

a general collection of them as well as of others, and to arrange the whole simply as they are rehearsed by the people, without making them up into epic pieces; which accordingly I did. The originals and translations were to have been published in separate volumes. Mr Shaw himself, with the greatest enthusiasm, voluntarily undertook to procure subscribers for me in England; and wrote me several letters on that subject from London, assuring me, in the most positive manner, of his success. But instead of performing what he had thus spontaneously undertaken, the very next part of his conduct towards me was, to hold me forth as an impostor in his pamphlet; in which character I soon saw myself attempted to be exposed in the periodical papers of England.

The reader, *who does not know me*, may possibly suspect my word. But, if he will take the trouble to demand them, he may see in my possession, the original letters of Mr Shaw, in his own hand-writing, addressed to me, on this subject.

The next thing which offers itself to our consideration, is *manuscripts*. “Why not produce and publish the manuscripts?” is the constant cry through every page:—yet, if the whole were produced, and published, our author gives us to understand, he would consider them only as translations from the English.

When I produce the originals, in my own hand-writing, taken down from the mouths of illiterate countrymen who rehearse them, Mr Shaw answers, that I have translated them from the English, and read them to those persons, until they have learned to repeat poems of great length, and without one word of variation. When these persons offer to swear, that they

they could repeat those poems twenty years before I was born, Mr Shaw replies, that they are *Scotchmen*, and that their oaths deserve no regard:—"for a respectable minister (p. 81.) offers to produce as many witnesses as Mr Shaw pleases, to swear to a falsehood, *knowing it to be such;*" and "another gentleman (p. 87.) offers to swear to a falsehood." If I send to an hundred persons, in the most remote corners of the isles, who have never been within an hundred miles of me, and they rehearse these poems, to any person appointed to hear them, Mr Shaw will say, that there has been a collusion, and that no Scotchman, except *himself*, can be believed.

Our Inquirer, however, has fixed upon one thing, which, he says, will satisfy him effectually:—If we will produce the originals, in Ossian's own handwriting, "with proper vouchers that there is no collusion," he will condescend to be converted. "How comes it (says he), that neither Ossian himself, nor any cotemporary bard, has reduced them to writing?" p. 61. What answer does the reader imagine I should give to a man, who demands originals in the hand-writing of one who never heard of letters! He would certainly think me highly reprehensible, did I honour these demands with any further notice than a contemptuous silence.

Although the evidence of every Highlander now living (our author alone excepted) is thus laid aside, and every Scotchman rejected as an exceptionable witness, I was particularly anxious to see what method he would fall upon to discredit the authenticity of the old Gaelic manuscripts containing some of

those poems. Our ancestors surely could not anticipate the present controversy, five or six centuries ago:—no collusion could, therefore, have been expected among them. This, however, he has endeavoured to effect by a bold stroke, unmatched in any other writer; and with a mode of reasoning, as absurd, as it is weak, impudent, and fallacious.

It is perhaps necessary to inform the reader, that *Earse* is a name for our language, totally unknown to us Highlanders, till we come abroad, and learn it from the natives of the Low Country, who apply it to our Gaelic, in contradistinction to the dialect of the same language spoken in Ireland. The language of the Highlanders and Irish, the characters they use, and their mode of contraction in writing, are, in a great measure, the same, and known to both by no other name than *Gaelic*. In our inquirer's two first publications, his Analysis and Dictionary, the word *Earse* is not to be found; but in the pamphlet now under consideration, it is introduced about fifty times, and the Gaelic of Scotland is never wrote by any other name. There is a feeble, but impudent and disingenuous, attempt at policy here, which the mere English reader cannot easily detect.

I will take advantage, says Mr Shaw, of the term *Earse*, which prevails in the Low Country, for the Gaelic, and divide that language into two;—the one I will call *Irish*, and the other *Earse*. All the old manuscripts, that are to be found in the Highlands, I will call *Irish*; since the language, character, and contractions, are, in a great measure, the same.—I will maintain, that they contain not the Scotch, but the Irish poetry and genealogies. I will then challenge

lence the Highlanders to produce their *Earse* manuscripts; and as no such language ever existed, except in the imagination of the inhabitants of the Low Country, this will embarrass the reader, and wrap the subject in a cloud which cannot easily be dispelled. Hence our author proceeds, “ the manuscripts in
 “ the possession of Mr M^cIntyre of Glenachaf, Ar-
 “ gyleshire, *are* written in the *Irish* character, dia-
 “ lect, and contractions,” p. 59. The old Gaelic
 “ manuscripts in the possession of John Mackenzie,
 “ Esq; secretary to the Highland Society of London,
 “ are said to be on the subject of Irish and High-
 “ land genealogies, and written in the *Irish* dialect
 “ and character,” p. 84. There certainly never was
 a higher insult offered to the judgment of mankind.
 Will Mr Shaw presume to say, that the Irish and
 Highlanders ever had a *different* language, character, or
 contractions? Until he has effrontery enough to make
 such a declaration in public, the reader will not
 surely hesitate to apply to this inquirer after *truth*,
 the appellation which he bestows on every Scotch-
 man, *that he writes with an illiberal intention to de-*
ceive.

To prove beyond the power of contradiction, the
 disingenuity as well as the gross ignorance of Mr
 Shaw, on a subject which he pretends to understand
 better than any man living, I will lay before the read-
 er the following facts. Mr Mackenzie has authori-
 sed me to say, “ That Mr Shaw had seen the manu-
 “ scripts in his custody before the publication of his
 “ pamphlet, had looked at them, and turned over

† Our *correct* author surely means GLENOE.

“ the leaves ; but at that time had read only a few
 “ words up and down in different places, but not
 “ one complete sentence, though requested so to do
 “ by Mr Mackenzie at that time. That since the
 “ publication of his pamphlet, Mr Shaw has again
 “ seen those manuscripts, and again read single words
 “ in different parts: but upon being pressed by Mr
 “ Mackenzie, in presence of another gentleman, to
 “ try to read a few sentences, he applied himself to
 “ one page of a manuscript in verse; and after po-
 “ ring about a quarter of an hour, he made out three
 “ lines, which related, as read aloud by Mr Shaw
 “ himself, to Oscar the son of Ossian. Upon be-
 “ ing asked how these lines agreed with the doc-
 “ trine of his pamphlet? Mr Shaw answered, That
 “ he believed they were the composition of the fif-
 “ teenth century, and not of Ossian.”

The disingenuity of Mr Shaw is as obvious as it is
 unpardonable. The manuscripts left in the possession
 of Mr Mackenzie, were not placed in his hands, as
 containing any of the originals of Ossian's poems.
 They were only intended to prove, that Mr M'Nicol
 had shown to the public, that there still exist Gaelic
 manuscripts written many centuries ago, in contra-
 diction to Dr. Johnson, who precipitately averred,
 that there is not a manuscript in the Highlands a
 hundred years old. *Vide M'Nicol's Remarks on Dr*
Johnson's Tour to the Hebrides, p. 303, et seq.

We have seen above, that his ignorance of the
 Gaelic is such, that he does not know what these ma-
 nuscripts contain. I do not choose to follow the ex-
 ample of our inquirer, by holding forth names to the
 public. But I am at present possessed of letters, which

I am ready to show, written by a gentleman of Ireland, who is no *native* of Scotland, and who, I believe, never was there, lamenting that Mr Shaw could not make use of the valuable materials put into his hands, in Dublin, to enable him to write his Gaelic Dictionary, because *he could not read one line of the Celtic character*. This gentleman is at present universally acknowledged to be in the first rank of Celtic literati; and his name would be sufficient to establish whatever he asserted, were I at liberty to make use of it: This I must decline, because it is too respectable to be written on the same page with that of Mr Shaw.

In p. 59. he says, that he is the only Scotchman who can decypher old manuscripts; and the reason assigned is, that he learned it in Ireland. I resided there as many years as Mr Shaw has done weeks, and yet I have seen many in Scotland who can decypher them much better than I can. Mr Shaw's words are these, "I believe I may say it *without vanity*, I understand the language (Celtic) as well as any man living," p. 43. The same high strain of encomium is repeatedly pronounced on his own superior knowledge;—yet the truth at last comes out, and he acknowledges his ignorance. Says he, "I rumaged Trinity college, had different persons in pay who understood the characters and contractions, &c." p. 60. Very mortifying! to be obliged to hire persons for information in a language of which he had written a Grammar and a Dictionary, and which (a few pages back) he himself knew as well as any man living! But it is an old observation, that a *certain* class of men require long memories.

Before we finish the subject of manuscripts, it is necessary to take notice of a passage which Mr Shaw has quoted from Dr Johnson's Tour to the Hebrides: "The editor has been heard to say, that part of the poem has been received by him in the Saxon character. He has then found, by some peculiar fortune, an unwritten language, written in a character which the natives probably never beheld."

Here Dr Johnson betrays ignorance, incompatible with his high pretensions to letters. There is not a man in Great Britain or Ireland, at all conversant with old manuscripts, but knows, that the Saxons, Highlanders, and Irish, wrote their different languages in the self-same character. Whether the Irish and Highlanders had them originally from the Saxons, or the Saxons from them, is a matter of no moment. They are undoubtedly the same; and came originally from the Romans, who were certainly the introducers of letters into Great Britain; from which they were transplanted, with the Christian religion, into Ireland. St Patrick, who was a Scotchman, is said to have been the first who introduced letters into Ireland; and if that was the case, it is probable, that the Irish, Scotch, and Saxons, received the Roman letters through the hands of the ancient Britons.

Mr Shaw exclaims, "I have the honour to mention the immortal Dr Johnson as my friend." Had the respect, which, throughout his pamphlet, he affects to pay the Doctor, been sincere, he would not, surely, have thus introduced him, to make him ridiculous. Mr Shaw knew very well, that the Doctor had written without book in the above passage. But,

in

in place of throwing a veil over the Doctor's weakness, he brings him forward in a manner at which Mr Shaw himself could not help laughing; and leaves it in the power of one, born after he had written volumes, to tell him, that he is neither immortal nor infallible.

I trust it has now appeared, that Mr Shaw has imposed upon the public in his representation of the Gaelic manuscripts and poetry. But as the ancient, and even modern, state of the Highlands is not generally understood, I shall endeavour to lay a short sketch of it before the reader, from which he will easily see how our ancient poems came to be preserved.

When St Columba, in the sixth century, gathered the monks into monasteries, the Gaelic was the only language of Scotland and Ireland; and Roman learning began to be cultivated in those monasteries. As there was a constant intercourse between the inhabitants of both islands, as the descendants of one common parent, and as their language was materially the same, it was reduced to writing in the same character, and on the same grammatical principles, by both. The policy of the clergy induced them to confine all learning to their own order; by which means they not only kept the vulgar in awe, with greater ease, but often arrived at the most eminent civil offices in the state. As the genius of Christianity did not, like that of Druidism, admit of a junction between the bards and the clergy, the former were prevented from partaking of the advantages arising from the cultivation of letters. The poetic trade, however, continued not only honourable, but lucrative. As books
were

were unknown to the people, the songs of the bards became the only amusement of their leisure hours. The authors were caressed, honoured, and rewarded, by a people enthusiastically fond of the memory of their forefathers. As the mind was not stored with any other subject of contemplation except these poems, they were learned with a degree of quickness, and preserved with a purity, which, to persons accustomed to the use of books, is not easily conceivable. His bard was to the ancient chief, what a library is to the modern one. Public academies were instituted for the study of the poetic art; and it is not to be imagined, that candidates would be wanting for such an employment. When the pious Christian went on a pilgrimage to the tomb of his favourite saint, the bard, with equal enthusiasm, travelled to the habitation of his favourite poet, to learn his compositions. When the compositions of one country had been acquired, those of another were sought after; Ireland and Scotland were alternately visited by the bards of each nation.

Although literature was thus neglected by the bards, it was industriously cultivated by the clergy of the Highlands and Isles before the Reformation. But the art of printing was unhappily little practised in our country before that period; and the manuscripts (a few excepted) shared the fate of the monasteries, which perished by the enthusiastic zeal of the times.

The modern state of the Highlands presents a view somewhat different, which easily accounts for the neglect of Celtic literature of late.

The people of fortune send their children, when
 very

very young, to the Low Country to be educated; who, as the Gaelic language is utterly unknown at the universities, have not an opportunity of learning it with other branches of education. The ends in view, and the means used, are the same with those of the natives of the Low Country: the parent looks with a wishful eye to the SOUTH for the advancement of the child. On his knowledge of classical learning and the English language, every promotion through life is thought entirely to depend. When his education is completed, he is fixed in some profession, the knowledge of which takes up his next period of life. When he has time to look around him, and reflect on the beauties of his mother-tongue, he is too far advanced in years to sit down to study the rudiments of it; and his indolence is in some measure justified by the scarcity of books written in it, to which he can find access. He is therefore necessitated to content himself with hearing and rehearsing the nervous compositions it contains; which he can no more reduce to writing, than the unlettered bard can who repeats them to him. Hence poetry, with a few exceptions, is neglected by the learned in the Highlands.—We shall next see by whom it is preserved.

When the rich send their sons to the university to search for science, the poor send theirs to the mountains to look after their cattle. These, as the land is not in general favourable to agriculture, constitute the principal wealth of the country; and, consequently, their preservation becomes the first object of attention. The mountains on which they feed being extensive, little time is exhausted in attending them

them. Leisure and retirement beget reflection; and the mind, undisturbed by the bustle of society, has full scope to look back to the tales of other years. The scenery in ancient poetry is familiar to the eye; and the breast, hitherto vacant, is ready for its reception. Thus the inferior sort of people search for persons who can rehearse those poems; and they learn them with incredible facility. And in this manner they acquire an early acquaintance with the illustrious characters celebrated in the traditions of their country.

But, to return to the subject: Mr Macpherson, in an advertisement prefixed to the originals he has published as a specimen, says, "The words are not, after the Irish manner, *bristled* over with useless and quiescent consonants, so disagreeable to the eye, and which rather embarrass than assist the reader."—This drew upon him an attack from Colonel Vallancey, who is allowed to be an ingenious Celtic antiquarian. The Colonel endeavours to defend the Irish language from the imputation of *bristliness*, in the manner of a gentleman and a scholar. The passage from Mr Macpherson, with the Colonel's criticism, is quoted by Mr Shaw with an air of the highest triumph and satisfaction. He pronounces the difference of orthography used by these gentlemen to be an unanswerable argument that the Poems of Ossian must be spurious †. Here one cannot peruse the

† It is with a very bad grace that Mr Shaw charges upon others a disagreement in the orthography of the Gaelic, when he often disagrees with himself in the spelling of the same word; as may be seen in his Dictionary throughout. In English he cannot make the verb agree with its nominative; and in his attempt to translate Galgacus's speech,

the Colonel's defence of the Irish with greater satisfaction, than he must view Mr Shaw's conduct with indignation, for bringing this as an argument against the authenticity of Ossian's Poems, after what he himself had written. Mr Shaw says in the 15th page of his *Analysis*, "Unlike the Irish, the Scots Gaelic de-
 " lights to pronounce every letter, and is *not bristled*
 " *over* with so many useless and quiescent conso-
 " nants. The English and the French are infinitely
 " more difficult to pronounce." Here he makes use of Mr Macpherson's own words. Let the reader compare this passage with the present publication, and withhold the name of IMPOSTOR from its author if he can. One of his assertions must be false, *intentionally* false too; for they relate not to matter of opinion, but are positive allegations concerning a language which, *he says*, he understands as well as any man living. Yet this very man has the consummate assurance to hold himself forth as a paragon of integrity; and the periodical papers of England are filled with his praise—as such, representing him as a miracle of sincerity and truth.

Great

speech, he has misunderstood the Latin. In short, he seems to me to be acquainted with no language whatsoever, and least of all with the Gaelic, which he says he understands as well as any man living. All the specimens he has given of the truth of his own assertion, shew that *his* Gaelic is an heterogeneous gibberish of Irish and English. It may be worth the reader's notice, that he calls his dictionary a *Scotch* as well as *Irish Gaelic, dictionary*; yet he affirms that he has adopted the orthography of the ancient Irish manuscripts; that is, he has found the Scotch Gaelic vocables in Irish manuscripts. Here is a noble confusion of ideas, not unworthy of the writer of an *Irish* dictionary, though there is a want of precision in the expression unsuitable to the accuracy necessary to a lexicographer.

Great part of Mr Shaw's pamphlet is taken up with a feeble and fruitless attack on Dr Blair's elegant *Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian*. No facts, however, that have the smallest foundation in truth, are produced against the Dissertation; and the reader will scarcely imagine that the Doctor stands in need of support from any other writer against the *arguments* of such an opponent as Mr Shaw. The following *assertions*, however, are very remarkable.

“ Dr Blair,” says Shaw, “ of all men living, has
 “ the greatest reason to be displeas'd, who has been
 “ *imposed upon*, and led to write in defence of a for-
 “ gery;” p. 19. “ The Doctor (Blair), how strenu-
 “ ously soever he has endeavoured to make *them*
 “ appear authentic, *must have known better*; for
 “ some say *it is* * the promiscuous production of Dr
 “ Blair and Mr Macpherson:” P. 39.

I shall leave the reader to make his own reflections on these two paragraphs, and reconcile them if he can.

But Mr Shaw proceeds, and says, “ The truth is,
 “ Dr Blair and Professor Ferguson, when Dr Piercy
 “ was at Edinburgh, took care to introduce a young
 “ student of divinity from the Highlands, who re-
 “ hearded some verses, of which Professor Ferguson
 “ said such and such passages in Fingal were the
 “ translation,” p. 46. †

I have personally applied to these two learned and elegant writers; and they have authorized me to assure the public, that the whole is, in every particular,

* This famous grammarian commits outrages against grammar in almost every page.

† Dr Ferguson has contradicted every word of this in the public papers already.

ular, a *falsehood* †. Upon such authority, the public will not hesitate to treat the story with the contempt it merits.

Similar to this fiction relative to two of the first literary characters of this age as well as nation, is what Shaw alleges concerning his interview with Mr Macpherfon on the subject of the Poems of Ossian. The distance of my place of residence from that gentleman, prevented me from applying to him in person. I chose therefore to request a friend to wait upon him in London, rather than write to him. That friend accordingly called upon him in my name; and he gave him in substance the following detail. His words were, as nearly as my friend can recollect, “ That, several years ago, Mr Shaw called
 “ at his house, and *introduced himself* without either
 “ recommendation or prior acquaintance whatsoever, but merely as a native of one of the Scotch
 “ isles, and a man who had studied the Gaelic language. That the avowed object of his calling
 “ was to solicit Mr Macpherfon’s interest to promote a subscription for a grammar of the Gaelic
 “ language, which he had written, or had in contemplation to write. That as a specimen of his
 “ knowledge of the Gaelic language, he left for
 “ Mr Macpherfon’s perusal and judgment, a translation of Mr Pope’s Messiah; which has been since
 “ printed, and annexed, by Mr Shaw, to his Grammar. That Mr Macpherfon, upon perusal of this
 “ specimen, conceived a very indifferent opinion
 “ both

† If Mr Shaw wishes to clear himself of this direct charge of writing a falsehood, he may apply to Dr Piercy, the respectable Dean of Carlisle, for his authority to contradict it in public.

“ both of Mr Shaw’s poetical talents and knowledge
 “ of the Gaelic; as the language was the very worst
 “ dialect of the Gaelic tongue, (that spoken in the
 “ isle of Arran), and the words throughout, misspelt,
 “ and scarcely intelligible. That Mr Shaw called re-
 “ peatedly, but at long intervals, upon Mr Macpher-
 “ son; by whom he was received only with a cold
 “ and distant civility, which might be understood
 “ from his not returning any one of Mr Shaw’s vi-
 “ sits. That he does not recollect, that Mr Shaw
 “ ever presumed to ask a sight of his manuscripts;
 “ and that, even if he had, Mr Macpherson should
 “ not have indulged his curiosity, as he both disliked
 “ the manners of the man, and knew that he was
 “ not capable of forming any just judgment upon the
 “ matter. That whatever farther, than what is sta-
 “ ted above, has been either written or said by Mr
 “ Shaw, relative to personal interviews with Mr
 “ Macpherson, is mere exaggeration, or a fiction
 “ meant to deceive and mislead the public.” Mr
 Macpherson also authorised my friend to declare to
 me, “ That the allegation of Mr Shaw, that the ma-
 “ nuscripts in the hands of Mr Mackenzie are the
 “ same that were deposited with his bookfeller, by
 “ Mr Macpherson, for the inspection of the public,
 “ is an *absolute falsehood*; as the last mentioned ma-
 “ nuscripts have never been out of Mr Macpherson’s
 “ possession, since he withdrew them from Mr Bec-
 “ ket’s shop, after they had remained there for many
 “ months.”

As for my own part, I mention the very names of
 men of literary eminence with respect. What then
 must I feel, when I see a man, distinguished for no-
 thing

thing less than for genius, truth, and candour, attempting to emerge from his natural obscurity, by an open attack upon the moral characters of men, who are an honour to their country, and an ornament to polite literature; and who, I am convinced, are as much above the reach of *my* praise, as Mr Shaw is below *their* contempt?

Mr Shaw proceeds, and says, “ A collection has
 “ lately been made up and published at Edinburgh,
 “ three years ago, by an ingenious *translator*, Mr
 “ Clarke, entitled, *The Caledonian Bards*. It has been
 “ reviewed at London, and adduced as an argument
 “ for the genuineness of Fingal. Mr Clarke, when I
 “ charged him with it, confessed that it was entirely
 “ made up. One of the poems of that collection is
 “ happily set off with the title of *The Words of Woe*.
 “ The author told me, all he had for the ground-
 “ work of it was a song called *Jurram na truaidhe*,
 “ composed on a late emigration of the Highlanders
 “ to America. In the same manner the rest of the
 “ collection was made up. It, however, does Mr
 “ Clarke’s ingenuity credit; although, in general, for
 “ the honour of his country, he also wishes to carry
 “ on the fraud of Ossian.” P. 30.

I take up the reader’s attention in what concerns myself in this pamphlet with particular reluctance. When I presumed to lay a small specimen of translations, executed in the course of my private hours, before the public, I little imagined that they would have produced an open attack upon my moral character. Criticisms of a *different* nature Mr Shaw might have extended through pages, without giving

the smallest uneasiness to me, or the public having been troubled with any defences of mine. Here, however, is a serious charge; and I shall give it a *very serious answer*, That it is FALSE—*grossly false*, and without the least foundation in truth. I have had conversations with many hundreds on the subject of the Gaelic poetry; and if one *honest man* (for I place my opponent in a different class) will say, that ever he heard me utter words similar to these which he puts into my mouth, I shall readily permit my name to be branded with eternal infamy.

Mr Shaw examined my manuscripts, and pointed out some parts where the translation was not quite literal. These, I think, were some of the objections he made.

*Cuim tha u gruamach, sa near,
A gnuis ailium tha aig astar na nial?*

which I had translated,

“ Why dost thou frown in the west, fair-haired
“ traveller of the sky?”

The literal translation might rather have been,

“ Why art thou furlly in the west, thou graceful
“ face that travellest through the clouds?”

*A mbiel thusa air sgithean do luaths,
A' ghaoth chum trial 'le t' uile nearst,
Thig le cardas dheomhsaidh 'maois,
Thoir scrib eatrom thar ma chraig?*

which I had translated,

“ Art thou on the wings of thy speed, O Wind?
dost

“ doft thou travel with all thy ftrength? Come in
 “ mildnefs to the cave of my reft, O breath of the
 “ north.”

The literal tranflation:

“ Art thou on the wings of thy fpeed, O Wind,
 “ for the purpose of travelling with all thy ftrength?
 “ Come with friendship towards my age, make a light
 “ turn over my rock.”

The Gaelic reader will perceive beauties in thefe lines which I have not been able to preferve in either of the tranflations. A *literal* tranflation of poetry, except for the ufe of fchools, is a thing unknown in any language. Mr Shaw will no doubt fay, that thefe are only tranflations from the Englifh. I cannot be fupposed very defirous of renewing an acquaintance with a man of *his* character; but, if the reader thinks it worth while to call upon me, I am ready to prove, that the manufcripts of the poems which I publifhed were in poffeffion of fome of the moft refpectable literati of Scotland, for years before this controverfy was thought of, and where Mr Shaw himfelf faw them.

Juram na truaidhe is here faid to have been compofed on a late emigration of the Highlanders to America. Now, if the reader will take the trouble to look into Mr Macdonald’s collection of original Gaelic poems, p. 251, he will find this beautiful elegy there; and that it contains nothing of that nature, but abounds with the overflowings of forrow, poured forth by a lady on the death of a chief. This poem was currently known in the Highlands for years before the people of that country ever thought

of emigrating from their native land. We need not therefore be surpris'd to hear our Inquirer denying the existence of poems orally recited, when he has the *unmatched* assurance to write falsehoods concerning those published in the original language, and in every Celtic reader's hands, long before my translations were either made or published.

I am tired, and I fear I have tired the reader much more, with joining falsehood to the name of Mr William Shaw; tho' downright fictions merit little more than *flat contradictions*: and yet I am roused to a repetition of those disagreeable *contradictions* in every page of his pamphlet; for there is not a page that is not replete with the most impudent falsehoods. Amidst the agitation which an honest mind feels at every daring violation of veracity, I sometimes hesitate, whether the respect due to *truth*, or the good manners to which the reader is entitled, should predominate. But as an attention to truth is in itself commendable, I trust I shall be excused for expressions, which under that consideration cannot be deemed too severe. Without making use of harsh epithets, I *flatly contradict* the following paragraph in p. 18. of Mr Shaw's pamphlet. " I can easily prove that these lines (the " original of the 7th book of Temora) have never " been known to any Highlander in Scotland, before he (Mr Macpherson) published them; but to " my certain knowledge, within these few years, an " illiterate Highland porter, or cady, of Edinburgh, " has got them by heart, being frequently read to " him by a gentleman (Mr Clark) zealous to support " the imposture. This gentleman is himself an *ingenious* translator."

In a conversation with Mr Shaw, on the subject of Gaelic poetry, he observed, that, amongst all the poems of Ossian which he had found in the Highlands, he had never met with the 7th book of Temora, published by Mr Macpherson. I replied, that an illiterate Highlander, residing in Edinburgh, had rehearsed it to me much in the same words that Mr Macpherson had published it—and therefore, that I had not taken it down, as I was possessed of the book. He wished to hear him; and he was sent for to a tavern, where he rehearsed some part of this poem, along with many others: This is all that I know of the matter. I have not spoken to this man since Mr Shaw's pamphlet appeared. He is a soldier in the city-guard; and if any person will take the trouble to inquire after him, he will find it to be a truth, that he had learned that poem long before he ever saw me.

It is very remarkable, that, though I had confessed *myself* an impostor, I should have submitted to so much drudgery to support the credit of Mr Macpherson. To love our neighbour as ourselves, is a very well-known injunction; but to love him *better*, is a species of morality which mankind have yet to learn.

Mr Smith is next brought forward. This gentleman, by his ingenious history of the Druids, and his very elegant translations from the Gaelic, has drawn upon him the virulence and scurrility of our inquirer. Mr Smith's character, as an honest man, is too firmly established, to require any support from me; and his abilities as a writer, stand confessed among the friends of genuine taste.

The first *period*, concerning this gentleman, is re-

markably long; and it contains three very extraordinary assertions. In the beginning, we are told, that he is a man of great modesty and worth—in the middle, that he is robbing Mr Macpherfon of his just right—and in the end, that he is an impostor. The reader must reconcile these contradictions in the best manner he can; since Mr Shaw has not done it for him.

Mr Shaw says, “ Mr Smith tells us the names and residence of men in his neighbourhood, *who* he has heard, for weeks together, rehearse ancient poems, many of which were Ossian’s; but he has not given us a single line of them, as a fact, in his Dissertation:” p. 33. This is another falsehood; for if the reader will examine Mr Smith’s book, he will find *six hundred and forty-eight* lines of the original of Ossian.

Mr Shaw proceeds, and asserts, “ *Nor* were I to call upon him (Mr Smith) to produce the Gaelic of any forty lines in either Fingal or Temora, *he* could not produce them;” p. 42. This is a remarkable paragraph. It begins with a supposition, which is not just; and concludes with a positive assertion, which is not true. To draw final conclusions from conjectural reasons, and tell us that a thing *must* have happened, because it *might* have happened, is a mode of reasoning with which logicians are yet unacquainted.

Mr Shaw knows very well, that proposals have been put up in the Shop of Mr Charles Elliot bookseller in Edinburgh, eighteen months ago, for publishing the originals of the poems which Mr Smith has translated from the Galic. The list of subscribers, though

though not very numerous, is respectable. Our Inquirer, however, endeavours to prevent their publication, by an exertion of his usual ingenuity, telling us that they are Mr Smith's own composition. He has, however, been rather unlucky in the means he has used to accomplish his ends. His arguments turn directly against himself.

Our Inquirer informs us, repeatedly, that the most ancient poems he has met with in the Highlands, are the *compositions of the fifteenth century*; that they display no mark of genius; that they are full of enchantment, witchcraft, hobgoblins, and such other stuff as marks a futile and contemptible performance; and that they can bear no translation. We are told, that the originals which Mr Smith is going to publish must be bad—(the reader will surely stare at the reason), because they are *not* composed by those illiterate bards, whom Mr Shaw has reprobated through the whole of his pamphlet, but by Mr Smith himself, whose literary merit does honour to an enlightened age. I exaggerate nothing on this point; let Mr Shaw's words speak for themselves.

“ All they (the Highlanders) could repeat, was nothing but a few fabulous and marvellous verses or stories concerning Fiann MacChumhal, alias Fingal, and his Fionæ, or followers, chacing each other from island to island, striding from mountain to mountain, or crossing a frith at a hop, with the help of *his* spear. There was much of enchantment, fairies, goblins, incantation, *rhymes*, and the second-sight.” P. 57. “ Sometimes representing the heroes as men, at other times as giants;

“ sometimes probable, and often marvellous; none
 “ of which can bear a translation:” P. 49.

After such a description of the ancient poetry of the Highlands, one would imagine that Mr Smith could claim no great share of merit for writing poetry *equally good* at least. But, notwithstanding this gentleman’s extraordinary talents and extensive learning, Mr Shaw tells us he has not been able to accomplish even this. For we are informed, “ That if
 “ the two copies do not fit each other better than
 “ the specimens already given, and if the *Gaelic poetry*
 “ *be not better*, we shall be at no loss to judge which
 “ is the original; and when it appears, we shall not
 “ neglect pointing out the vulgarisms and local
 “ phraseology to the few of his countrymen that are
 “ judges of the tongue:” P. 49. “ Mr Smith has
 “ not given us that of the old poet, but those he
 “ made from his English original; the local phrase-
 “ ology, and the forced strain of which, to any dis-
 “ cerning reader, points out the imposition:” P. 48.

It would be an insult to the reader’s judgment, to insist any farther on this part of the argument. It is curious to observe, how our author sometimes stumbles upon the truth, notwithstanding all his endeavours to avoid it. If Mr Shaw himself could not carry on a deception through an eighteen-penny pamphlet, how could the translators from the Gaelic succeed through volumes, without one slip, which the penetrating eye of criticism could catch hold of? The purity and elegance of Mr Smith’s translations, will speak to future times, for themselves, in far more favourable terms than any thing which I can write in their vindication. But, though I admire Mr Smith’s
 elegant

elegant taste, and respect his shining abilities, I am very much of Mr Shaw's opinion, that he is utterly incapable of composing any thing equal to the sublime originals he has translated.

Our author proceeds—"Then an ingenious apology would have been contrived—the man had died of a fever, or had emigrated to America. Some such misfortune has befallen the whole of them; for all the Highlands have not been able to show three lines, excepting those Mr Macpherson translated as a specimen, and which in reality are his own translations." P. 42.

Our Inquirer still continues to write what he *knows* is not true. In about two pages only of his own *Analysis* (p. 157,) we have the original of *Malvina's Dream by Ossian*, extending to *fifty-eight* lines, with the literal translation by Mr Macpherson subjoined, besides other specimens from that bard. These were never published by Mr Macpherson. In p. 133 of the *Analysis*, at the foot of another quotation from *Ossian*, we have these remarkable words:

"These lines have beauties, which the translation, (Mr Macpherson's), notwithstanding its excellence, has not been able to display."

I should like to hear Mr Shaw pay a *modest* compliment to his own abilities, by telling us, that *he* translated the lines alluded to, from the English. If he does, I shall be at no loss for an answer to him: suffice it for me to say, at present, They are *Ossian's*. He has indeed favoured us with a translation of Mr Pope's *Messiah*, and some other pieces, from English, into Gaelic poetry. But oh! how different from *Malvina's Dream*! He has, indeed, had the prudence to save

save himself from the possibility of any particular criticism; for I defy him to find one Highland scholar who can make two lines of it approach, in the least, to common sense, or even understand the meaning of his very words:—probably he has gone upon an old supposition, that what is *not understood*, must be *admired*.

Thus it appears from Mr Shaw's own writing, that what he asserts is *not true*; and that more of the original of Ossian is to be found, than Mr Macpherson has translated.

“ Why not publish (says he) large extracts from these manuscripts?—Are they afraid, that the Highland public, who are so zealous to establish the authenticity, will not purchase? It cannot be believed; but the reason is, they are not to be found.” P. 45. Our author forgot to place the signature of irony after this paragraph. But those who know what pushing and sollicitation Mr Shaw had to make, before he could procure subscribers to indemnify the expence of publishing his own Dictionary of that language, will read this passage with a proper tone. I have just now before me a letter, written by Mr Shaw, advising me not to publish any originals. As there is nothing of a private nature contained in the letter, the following extract from it can do no hurt to Mr Shaw, where he ought not to be hurt; and it will explain this matter.

“ The Gaelic is the worst subject you can use your pen upon. The Highlanders themselves that have taste, are poor, and buy no books; those who have any thing, despise both the language and those
“ who

“ who speak it, but when they have regiments to
“ raise.”

The question has been thus answered by Mr Shaw himself, long before he put it; and the passage requires no comment.

Mr Shaw tells us, that he offered to purchase any number of lines of the original of *Osian*, from Professor Macleod of Glasgow, not under six, at the rate of half a crown each word.

As the answer to this assertion could only come with propriety from Professor Macleod himself, I used the freedom to apply to that gentleman, through the medium of a friend who has the honour of his acquaintance. The Professor, with that liberality which marks his character, wrote me, in consequence of my friend's application, the following letter, the original of which is in my possession.

“ Sir,

“ IN answer to your inquiry respecting the use
“ made of my name in the pamphlet against Mr
“ Macpherfon, I beg leave to assure you, that the
“ pamphleteer has taken those liberties with my name,
“ most improperly, without my knowledge, and with-
“ out a due regard to truth. In particular, I declare
“ that *Mr William Shaw* never did challenge me to
“ produce any number of lines of the original of *Os-*
“ *fian's* poems, offering to pay me half a crown *per*
“ word for all that I should produce; and that no such
“ challenge was given, nor offers made, nor any thing
“ to the same purpose said, by any person, at any
“ time, either to me, or to any other in my hearing.
“ I have only to add, that if any such offer should
“ here-

“ hereafter be made, by any man possessed of half-
 “ crowns, I shall not hesitate to accept the condition;
 “ assured as I am, that I shall find no difficulty in
 “ procuring any number of lines of the original
 “ poems. Mr Macpherson, with whom I had the
 “ happiness of commencing a very early acquaint-
 “ tance at college, read a considerable part of those
 “ poems to me in the original *Gaelic*, before the pub-
 “ lication of his version; and it was owing to my
 “ own engagements at the time, and not to any
 “ backwardness on his part, that I had not the plea-
 “ sure of hearing him read the whole. He lately
 “ indulged me with the original of several passages
 “ of both the poems of Fingal and Temora, to gra-
 “ tify a third gentleman, who wished to have those
 “ passages in *Gaelic*; and I have not the least doubt
 “ of his disposition to oblige me, or any man who
 “ applies to him like a gentleman, in the same way
 “ again, or by giving any other satisfaction on the
 “ subject, that can be reasonably desired.

“ I have the honour to be, &c.”

To Mr John Clark,
 Bristo-Street, Edin^r.

H. MACLEOD.

We have seen, from the above, that Mr Shaw made
 no *pecuniary* offer whatsoever to Professor Macleod.
 But if he will be so very obliging as to make a simi-
 lar offer to me, I shall engage to ease him of all the
 cash he has to spare.

It will be needless to say any thing with respect to
 the general attack which Mr Shaw has made on the
 character of the gentlemen and clergy of the High-
 lands, whose testimonies have been produced as proofs

of

of the authenticity of Ossian's poems, by Dr Blair in his *Critical Dissertation*. The public shall be left to judge, whether the evidence of so respectable a number of men of fortune, veracity, ability, and learning, or that of Mr Shaw, is most to be relied on, from the specimens I have given of his *adherence to truth*.

Mr Shaw says, "A gentleman promised to ornament a scolloped shell with silver, if I should bring him one from the Highlands, and *to swear* it was the identical shell out of which Fingal used to drink." P. *ult.*

I showed this paragraph to a respectable baronet, little knowing he had any concern in it. He started from his chair, with marks of the utmost astonishment; and told me, that he himself was the gentleman alluded to. He said, that he had once desired Mr Shaw to bring a scolloped shell from the Highlands, such as our ancestors used to drink out of; and that he would have it mounted with silver, to show his friends the manner of drinking in the days of Fingal. This was the whole of the story; and Mr Shaw is hereby challenged to abide by that he has given, or to give any other representation of it. The gentleman himself makes no secret of the affair; but an illustrious race of ancestors, joined to his own equally illustrious character, renders his name too respectable to be mentioned in conjunction with that of our author. Were I at liberty to mention the obligations Mr Shaw lies under to him, the reader would see falsehood and ingratitude to an extent which they have seldom attained in the most corrupted age.

I have not yet been able to discover the Highland clergyman,

clergyman, who is said to have offered himself, and also to procure others, to swear to a lie. In name of the whole body of Scotch clergymen, however, I pronounce it a falsehood; which, from the specimens I have given of the integrity of this *lover of truth*, the public will, I hope, find little difficulty in admitting.

But, if Mr Shaw is most unjustly and illiberally severe on the private characters of those who oppose his assertions, he is scarcely more favourable to such as are friends to himself and his allegations, for they cannot be called his opinions. The *immortal* Dr Johnson, as he terms him, is his known patron; not, I believe, from an opinion of his genius and good qualities, but on account of his (Mr Shaw's) exertions to gratify his resentment or his prejudices. But notwithstanding the obligations he is said to owe to the Doctor; either through folly or design, he exposes him in the pamphlet which is the subject of this Essay, by printing, as I am told, a mutilated copy of a letter, alleged to have been written by Dr Johnson to Mr Macpherson in the year 1775.

The letter, whether real or fictitious, is of no moment. The fact, I am assured by a friend, was as follows:

Mr Macpherson had written to him by the hands of a gentleman, that as he had declined to withdraw from his book the injurious expressions reflecting on Mr Macpherson's *private* character, his age and infirmities, alone, protected him from the treatment due to an infamous liar and traducer. The letter he could receive only through the hands of Dr Johnson, who could also have supplied him with the other. But it seems

seems they were afraid to exhibit both together, as the contrast must have appeared striking, between the representation of a gentleman on an occasion which called so loudly for an explanation; and the polite epithets or terms, *foolish, impudent, ruffian, cheat, imposture, immoral*, which constitute the Doctor's answer.

“ There has been lately published at London, a
 “ book entitled *Remarks on Dr Johnson's Tour into the*
 “ *Hebrides*. This book has been many years in com-
 “ posing. It underwent a vast variety of editions in
 “ manuscript; and has been corrected, amended, and
 “ improved, by many hands in Scotland; and, find-
 “ ing its way to London, was prepared for the press
 “ by a friendly embellisher. These amendments and
 “ additions are ascribed by many to Mr Macpherson
 “ himself. How far this is true, I do not pretend
 “ to say: but I am certain it has been done by some
 “ person who has lived in England, some man dif-
 “ ferent from the ostensible author; for there are
 “ such local circumstances mentioned in the book, as
 “ a person who had never been south of the Tweed
 “ could not have been acquainted with. If it be Mr
 “ Macpherson's composition, it is his last effort in
 “ this controversy.

“ I shall not take up my time with making obser-
 “ vations on the illiberality and scurrilities of which
 “ it is made up; but only will point out to the world
 “ such a fresh instance of imposture as will astonish,
 “ in which the author triumphs as having proved the
 “ authenticity of Ossian's poems.—The book was
 “ written on purpose to establish the genuineness of
 “ the poems. How far it has succeeded, appears
 “ from

“ from the following fraud, the only argument ad-
 “ duced:—*But as Dr Johnson may think it too great a*
 “ *trouble to travel again to the Highlands for a sight*
 “ *of old manuscripts, I shall put him on a way of*
 “ *being satisfied nearer home. If he will but call*
 “ *some morning on John Mackenzie, Esq; of the*
 “ *Temple, Secretary to the Highland Society, he will*
 “ *find in London more volumes in the Galic lan-*
 “ *guage and character, than perhaps he will be*
 “ *pleased to look at, after what he has said. ‘ A-*
 “ *mong these is a volume, which contains some of Ossian’s*
 “ *poems.’*—On reading the last sentence, I was over-
 “ joyed that the originals of Ossian were at last dis-
 “ covered, notwithstanding my own bad success in
 “ meeting with them. Being impatient to see them,
 “ I accordingly lost no time in waiting on Mr Mac-
 “ kenzie; and, having looked over these volumes
 “ in manuscript, found no compositions of Ossian
 “ therein! They are manuscripts written in the Irish
 “ dialect and character, on the subject of Irish and
 “ Highland genealogy.—We have every reason to
 “ believe that this is the very manuscript, if any,
 “ that was left at Becket’s by Mr Macpherson some
 “ time ago, with a view to impose it as that of Ossian;
 “ for I am credibly informed, this very piece was sent
 “ to Mr Mackenzie by him.

“ As the writer of the Remarks seems himself en-
 “ tirely ignorant of the contents of that manuscript,
 “ being a stranger to the Irish character and contrac-
 “ tions, it was vainly believed by him and his parti-
 “ zans, that with an old Irish manuscript on genea-
 “ logy they might prove the originality of Ossian.

“ This last attempt to deceive, is an insult more
 “ glaring

“ glaring than the imposture it was intended to sup-
 “ port, and which determined me not to overlook it.
 “ Nor is this the only literary imposture that has been
 “ attempted by a Scotchman.—A Lauder endeavoured
 “ ed to prove Milton’s *Paradise Lost* a plagiarism, by
 “ liberal quotations from his countryman Hog’s
 “ translation of Milton into Latin, by false quota-
 “ tions from Masenius, Staphorstus, Taubmannus,
 “ &c. with Latin lines of his own forging, until de-
 “ tected by Dr Douglas.”

No part of this pamphlet is introduced with greater propriety than the last paragraph. Our inquirer could not find in the annals of British literature, an author who resembled himself so nearly as Mr Lauder. Dr *Johnson* says very justly, “ Who can take pleasure in lessening the reputation of Milton, which in some degree lessens the honour of the English nation ?” If Lauder then had the boldness to assassinate *his* memory in London, need we be surprised to see Mr Shaw endeavour to murder a bard born to the *north* of the Tweed in the same meridian? Because Lauder was an impostor, we are told with an air of satisfaction, that he was a *Scotchman*. But the learned Dr Douglas, who relieved the English nation from the consternation into which the loss of this justly admired poet had thrown them, by dragging Lauder to public justice, and compelling him to confess the whole forgery—is not mentioned as being a Scotchman. No: this circumstance is carefully concealed by our *lover of truth*; for that might be some ideal honour on Scotland.

I have received the following letter from the reverend Mr M^cNicol; which, together with what is

said already by Messrs Macpherson and Mackenzie, will surely satisfy the public as to the truth of what is asserted with respect to this learned clergyman. This *ostensible* author, it seems, can narrate a few *facts* without the assistance of the literati of London.

“ Sir,

Lismore, Oct. 5. 1781.

“ The pleasure of your very agreeable favour of
 “ the 27th *ult.* I received in course. I have seen Mr
 “ Shaw’s late publication. His arguments are so far
 “ from being *formidable*, that I read them with cool
 “ unconcern. They are evidently the fumes of a brain
 “ overheated with arrogance, and rendered highly
 “ rancorous with spleen and disappointment. The
 “ performance is a mock on all *sincerity*; and the
 “ author has so far overacted his part, as to invali-
 “ date the very side of the question he meant to sup-
 “ port, by a rhapsody of the *grossest impositions*, and
 “ most *impudent falsehoods*, unsupported by the small-
 “ est shadow of *evidence*: I should reckon it, there-
 “ fore, the highest disgrace to any cause, to depend
 “ upon the testimony of such an advocate. If his
 “ other assertions, as I have great reason to believe
 “ is the case, be founded on no better proof than
 “ what he has suggested with regard to me, there is
 “ not a *single truth contained in his whole composition*.
 “ I consider what he has said of my Remarks as the
 “ highest panegyric, when he insinuates that *they were*
 “ *made up by Mr Macpherson*. The meaning of this
 “ seems clearly to be, that none, except the chief
 “ person concerned in the contest, was capable of
 “ such a performance. Such a flattering insinuation,
 “ had it come from a person of any dignity, could
 “ not

“ not fail to rouse the vanity of an author upon his
 “ first appearance; so that I think I might be worse
 “ employed, than in sending him a letter of thanks
 “ some of these days. It may not, perhaps, be im-
 “ proper to lay before the public a few solid facts
 “ concerning this *man of might*, this impudent *re-*
 “ *tailer of falsehoods*. But I imagine it might make
 “ him consider himself of some consequence were he
 “ to be taken any further notice of.

“ Mr Shaw talks, with his usual confidence, *of my*
 “ *ignorance in Celtic characters, &c. &c.* and af-
 “ ter giving a pompous detail, as if *from personal*
 “ *knowledge*, of the progress of my MS. before it was
 “ published, he then strongly insinuates that I am
 “ only the *ostensible author*, as he fastidiously terms it,
 “ and ascribes the book to *Mr Macpherson*. Would
 “ not any person naturally infer from this, that *Mr*
 “ *Shaw must have known me?* But, however surpris-
 “ ing it may appear, I can assure the public in the
 “ most *solemn manner*, and so far as *they are safe to*
 “ *trust to the word of a Scots clergyman*, that he is as
 “ entire a stranger to my abilities, as to my person.
 “ He never saw me, nor corresponded with me.
 “ Though I would trust little to any declaration of
 “ his, I dare appeal to his own testimony, however
 “ fallacious in most respects, for the truth of this
 “ fact. Let the world judge then, how this *friend*
 “ *to truth* had access to know any thing concerning
 “ my knowledge, except from *vague, unsupported*
 “ *assertions*; his usual mode of reasoning. I dare say
 “ it must surprize the public, when I *declare* I am in
 “ the same situation with regard to Mr Macpherson.
 “ I never had the honour of seeing him; I never cor-

“ responded with him *upon any subject*; nor has he
 “ ever seen my MS. *so far as I know*. Let the pub-
 “ lic judge from this, if Mr Shaw’s pretended *facts*
 “ be altogether such *stubborn things* as he arrogantly
 “ boasts!—*Latet anguis in herba*.—Let the world be-
 “ ware of the consummate effrontery of this fluctu-
 “ ating partisan!

“ When Mr Shaw called upon Mr Seton of Ap-
 “ pin, who lives within two hours journey of me,
 “ under pretence of inquiring after *Gaelic antiqui-*
 “ *ties*, &c. he was directed to come here. But this
 “ *explorer of retired corners*, this *friend to truth*, this
 “ *indefatigable inquirer after Ossian’s originals*, this
 “ *man of state*, who degenerated so far from his pri-
 “ stine *eminence* and *high breeding*, as to be frequent-
 “ ly obliged to *creep into many an humble cottage on*
 “ *all fours*; this *distinguished personage*, I say, who
 “ pretends to have left nothing *undone*, that might *be*
 “ *done*, for supporting the *expiring dignity* of poor
 “ Scotland, and the *honour* of the cause he was en-
 “ gaged in, would not deign to visit my *obscure resi-*
 “ *dence*, where, for any thing he knew, he might ven-
 “ ture to enter even in an *erect posture*. This he pru-
 “ dently evited, for fear of finding something that
 “ might tend to defeat the schemes he had concert-
 “ ed. When Mr Seton informed him he might pro-
 “ bably get some satisfaction from me as to the ob-
 “ jects he *pretended* to have in view, Mr Shaw ask-
 “ ed ‘ if I was not the person who was said to be
 “ writing against *Dr Johnson*?’ Yes, replied Mr Se-
 “ ton; and as you seem to know so much about him,
 “ you ought certainly to see him, *unless you mean to*
 “ *travel like the Doctor*, and studiously avoid such
 “ places

“ places as are pointed out to you for intelligence.
 “ What can the world expect from the *confident* as-
 “ sertions, or *pretended* intelligence, of a person so
 “ wavering in his disposition? He changed *sides once*
 “ already; he changed *even his creed* in matters of
 “ still *higher moment**. What security can the public
 “ have then that he has yet fixed his station, or
 “ come to his final resolution? When we are assured
 “ that this is the case, and that this *shuttlecock* is
 “ confined to one party, then will be the time to
 “ settle all disputes with him. And yet, though he
 “ is in the above awkward attitude, such is the ef-
 “ frontery of the man, that he will not be put to the
 “ expence of a conscious blush; but imagines, for-
 “ sooth, he must be thought of consequence, and
 “ claim the attention of the public because he is *noisy*
 “ and *insolent*.

“ My first acquaintance with Mr Shaw’s character
 “ commenced so early as his coming to teach a gram-
 “ mar school in Glenurchy. From whence he thought
 “ prudent to decamp after a few weeks residence:
 “ but I leave Mr Shaw himself to explain the cause
 “ of this *sudden* elopement.

“ The next specimen I had of him was in a letter
 “ from my esteemed friend Mr M’Intyre of Glenoe,
 “ informing me, that he was so inconsiderate, before
 “ he knew Mr Shaw’s character, as to give him, for a
 “ few days, till he should return from Mull, the pe-
 “ rusal of a collection of vocables which he com-
 “ piled for an intended *Gaelic dictionary*, and which

D 3

“ Mr

* Mar ’bha gille moirre nan Bram
 Bhidh e thall ’sbhidh e bhos.

“ Mr Shaw was *bound in honour* to return on his
 “ coming back from Mull; but that he sent only
 “ such as he had time to copy off. The rest he has
 “ not yet thought proper to restore, for which
 “ Glenoe now threatens to prosecute him. This
 “ shameful and *glaring breach of confidence* was in-
 “ stantly made public over the whole neighbour-
 “ hood. And as the complaint came from a person
 “ of Glenoe’s known modesty and integrity, Mr
 “ Shaw’s character was immediately *blasted*, and
 “ marked with the proper *stigma*. At that very
 “ time it was thought prudent, as a *caveat* to the
 “ community, to send a note relative to the above-
 “ mentioned fraud to the publishers of the Weekly
 “ Magazine. But they did not think proper to inter-
 “ fere with private characters.

“ My next acquaintance with him was his *Gaelic*
 “ *grammar and dictionary*; performances of as despi-
 “ cable a nature as ever disgraced the press in this
 “ or any other age, and such as are absolutely *be-*
 “ *low censure*. Notwithstanding my avowed, I had
 “ almost said, enthusiastic, fondness for all perform-
 “ ances of this sort that have the smallest spark of
 “ merit, I, with all such as know any thing of the
 “ subject they contain, frequently lamented over
 “ them with real *contempt* and *pity*; considering
 “ them as downright *insults* to the public, and mere
 “ *catchpennies*. His dictionary in particular is a
 “ *mock* upon common sense, and an insult upon the
 “ public: because, in place of an Albion Gaelic dic-
 “ tionary, which he had promised, and was impa-
 “ tiently looked for, he put off his subscribers with
 “ a pitiful, unmeaning *rap* of an *Irish vocabulary*,
 “ favouring

“ favouring rankly of the *Arran dialect* deeply Hiber-
 “ nized. Were it necessary, I could procure num-
 “ bers of the most respectable characters in the High-
 “ lands, and all of them deeply versed in the Gaelic
 “ language, to confirm the above assertion. Mr
 “ Shaw scorns to *advise*; he *imperiously commands*,
 “ the public to pay no regard to the declaration of
 “ any *Scotsman*, or indeed to the whole community
 “ of *Scotsmen*, should they unite as one man to con-
 “ tradict *his single testimony*, as to any fact whatever.
 “ This is a new mode of argumentation, by which all
 “ disputes will be easily settled in his favour. And it is
 “ highly necessary for him to take shelter under this
 “ fallacious mask.

“ When Mr Shaw’s treatment of Glenoe was
 “ once made public, there was an end to his pro-
 “ curing any more intelligence in this part of the
 “ world, had he seriously meant it; because dif-
 “ ferent gentlemen instantly wrote one another an
 “ account of his character, so as to guard against
 “ his designs. And yet he would persuade us, that
 “ the late Mr Neill M’Leod, with some others, were
 “ desirous of procuring intelligence for him. Does
 “ he really imagine, though mankind bore so long
 “ with his insolence, that they are become altoge-
 “ ther such gulls as to give credit to so unlikely a
 “ tale? We may be sure few would entrust him with
 “ MSS. after his intention was so publicly known.
 “ For, if he saw any thing that reflected the smallest
 “ honour upon the country, they were confident he
 “ *would destroy them*. And I would recommend to Mr
 “ Mackenzie to be cautious in laying any MSS. before

“ him for the future. Let him beware of Glenoe’s
“ fate!

“ In the preface to his Dictionary, Mr Shaw has
“ the assurance to *amuse* the public with *imaginary*
“ aid he got from Mr Archibald M’Arthur, minister
“ in Mull; with a view, no doubt, to persuade the
“ world that he was indebted, in this pitiful *cheat*, to
“ persons well acquainted with the Gaelic language.
“ This story stands as follows: Mr M’Arthur in-
“ formed me, that he one day laid before Mr Shaw
“ some vocables he had collected for an intended
“ Gaelic Dictionary; but that he no sooner observed
“ him beginning to mark down a few words, than he
“ immediately gathered his papers, and locked them
“ them by, as he knew Mr Shaw’s design; so that he
“ told me he was confident he did not copy off a
“ dozen of words. Mr Shaw, we see, can be some-
“ times thankful for *small favours*, though he gave
“ Glenoe *no credit* for the vocables got from him.

“ Were I in your place, I would not honour him
“ with any answer as to the main question:—it will
“ be sufficient to shew the public that his perform-
“ ance is one continued train of falsehoods, and re-
“ serve your serious answers on that subject for an
“ opponent more worthy of them.

“ I am, Sir, your, &c.

To Mr John Clark,

Bristo-Street, Edinr.

DONALD M’NICOLL.

I have now gone over the whole of what Mr Shaw
calls his *stubborn facts*; and no troop, I believe, ever
displayed less fortitude in the day of battle. I have
not hitherto rested the merits of the question on the
in-

insufficiency of his arguments; nor on his gross ignorance of Celtic, and even English grammar: but I have charged him with avowedly publishing falsehoods, *knowing them to be such*. I have confined myself to the leading points of the question; for to drag forward every untruth, would be nearly a republication of his pamphlet. The personal animosities subsisting between the translator of Ossian and Dr Johnson, concerns not the merits of the present controversy, altho' I am convinced it drew its existence from that circumstance alone.

So much for Mr Shaw's *facts*; we shall next give a few specimens of his *arguments*.

“ The bison, a species of wild cow, the peculiar native of the forests and mountains of Scotland, although now extinct, was certainly common in those days; yet no mention is made of it.” P. 27.

I would be very glad to know how Mr Shaw came to learn that the bison was the peculiar native of Scotland more than of other countries.

Since our Inquirer has not been able to prove the poems of Ossian spurious from what they *do contain*, he endeavours to effect his purpose from what they *do not contain*; and asserts, that they must be an imposition, because they contain not a list of all the beasts of the field. He has lately published a Dictionary, about four times the price of all the poems translated by Mr Macpherson; yet it contains not one third of the language—the very word in question is not there.

The next infallible mark of imposition is, that “ Hunting the wild boar is not mentioned.”—The assertion, however, is not true. Hunting the wild boar is often mentioned in poems in my possession, which go by the name of Ossian, though not in those translated

translated by Mr Macpherson. From these two *detections*, however, Mr Shaw rears his crest with an ostentatious confidence, and concludes the victory to be decided in his own favour.

“ It were too much to suppose that the author
 “ could be so happy as to succeed in every thing,
 “ and make the deception complete. In an impos-
 “ ture, a man cannot shut every avenue to detection.
 “ However, it has succeeded far enough; a variety
 “ of editions have been sold; and the author has ac-
 “ quired credit by his ingenuity.—That was the
 “ great *desideratum*. I, however, envy it not.

“ *O grant me honest fame, or grant me none!*” P. 28.

If any one personally acquainted with Mr Shaw can read the last line with gravity, he has obtained a command over his muscles which I have not been able to acquire.

“ Thither (to the Highlands) the author went to
 “ see the face of the country, and the appearances of
 “ nature; besides that, he was born and lived long
 “ in the mountains and valleys: Hence that serious-
 “ ness which pervades the whole, and which is so
 “ familiar to every Highlander; and is one great
 “ reason why every one of them is so ready to be-
 “ lieve the Poems authentic.” P. 29.

Our Inquirer has here acknowledged what he has every where else denied—that the Highlanders *believed* the Poems authentic. Seriousness is here said to be familiar to every Highlander—I believe it; But how a serious man comes to be easier imposed upon than one void of reflection, is not quite so clear.

“ *Any*

“ *Any Englishman may go down and see these phenomena in the elements and face of the country; of which he may lay up a number, and write, when he comes home, poetry of the same nature.*”

P. 29.

If *any* Englishman can write poems equal to those of Ossian, it is remarkable that not one Englishman or Scotchman has ever produced one stanza as a specimen, except those who have *avowedly* translated them from the Gaelic. I am sure Mr Shaw will heartily join with me in saying, that the English and the inhabitants of the Low Country are far more learned than the modern Highlanders, who, he says himself, are at this day only emerged from a state of nature; that they have the advantage of the English being their mother-tongue, which the Highlanders are obliged to study from books, as a foreign language: yet, with all these advantages, I call upon Mr Shaw to produce one piece, composed by one of them, equal even to the translations of the Poems of Ossian.

“ I remember, when I travelled that country three years ago, to have sat down on a hill; and, the scene being favourable, in a poetic mood, I jingled together upon paper, with suitable invented Gaelic names, the epithets of *blue-eyed, meek-eyed, mildly-looking, white-bosomed, dark-brown locks, noble, generous, valiant, tears, spears, darts, hearts, harts, quivers, bows, arrows, helmets, steel, streams, torrents, noble deeds, other times, bards, chiefs, storms, songs, &c.* and produced a little poem, which reads pretty smoothly; and, if I had a mind to publish it, it would be no difficult matter

“ ter

“ter to persuade some people I had translated it
“from the Galic.” P. 30.

This is the first time that ever I heard of Mr Shaw’s being in a poetic mood; and the offspring of that mood is just what I would have looked for, “a jingle
“suitable” to the expectations of any person acquainted with Mr Shaw’s poetical abilities. This jingle, however, we are told, reads pretty smoothly: *prettiness* and *smoothness*, to be sure, are very necessary qualifications in a poet.—What a pity it is, that Mr Shaw has not condescended to favour us with this *pretty smooth* piece of composition; and thereby prove himself to be as great a favourite of the Muses, as he tells us he is *a lover of truth!* But there was no great occasion for producing the poem. Mr Shaw assures us it is good; and he is a gentleman of too much *honour* and *veracity* to suspect that his word would be called in question. Had Milton, Dryden, Pope, and the rest of those foolish poets, taken the same precaution, and given us their **WORDS**, in place of their **WORKS**, for their being good poets, it might have saved their memories from those censures which have sometimes been pronounced against them.

“I have in my possession a small collection of
“Galic poems, which I have been preparing, (for I
“also was about to be a translator!) I have made
“up a sort of a poem of some length from these
“few stanzas, entirely different from Mr Smith’s,
“only that we both retain the same Dargo as our
“mutual hero. If sale could be expected for
“them, I should find it no difficult matter, in my
“notes, to give specimens of the *original*; and I am
“sure

“ sure I would avoid giving those I received from
 “ the people, because they cannot bear a translation.
 “ And indeed Mr Smith gives us not those of the
 “ old poet, but those he made from his English ori-
 “ ginal; the local phraseology, and the forced strain
 “ of which, to any discerning reader, point out the
 “ imposition. In short, Mr Smith’s and my little
 “ poem both retain the same name of *Dargo*, have
 “ received none of the incredible and marvellous
 “ feats of the few original lines, and are each of
 “ them as different from it, and from one another,
 “ as, perhaps, the sermons would be which he and
 “ I might write upon one text.” P. 47, 48.

Mr Shaw proclaims himself a firm friend to truth
 through the whole of his pamphlet; and tells us re-
 peatedly, that “ he would despise himself, were he
 “ capable of supporting an untruth.” Yet we see,
 from the above passage, that *want of sale* for his
 works was the only thing that prevented him from
 publishing what he calls *forgeries*. I heartily agree
 with Mr Shaw, that Mr Smith’s translation of *Dargo*
 and his would be very *different* poems.

“ Had I been ignorant of the Galic, less credit
 “ might be expected to my narration of facts; but
 “ having written a grammatical Analysis and a Dic-
 “ tionary of it, it may be readily believed I should
 “ rejoice to have it in my power to produce the ori-
 “ ginals of these poems to the public, as the Dic-
 “ tionary and Grammar might, perhaps, be sought
 “ after, to help the curious in forming some opinion
 “ of the original. Thus it would be my interest to
 “ support the authenticity, did I think it honest.”
 P. 53.

Why should more credit be given to a Highlander's narration of facts, than that of any other person? I believe I have as much of the *amor patriæ* as Mr Shaw; yet I would not presume to say, that another man was not to be credited as soon as a Highlander. Through almost every page of his pamphlet, he is constantly cautioning the reader not to believe a Highlander, even upon oath—and produces instances where even clergymen offered to depone to a lie: yet here we see him claiming credit to his assertions merely from his being a *Highlander*. As to the sacrifice of interest said here to have been made to *truth*, it is, like the rest, without any foundation. Mr Shaw sold the property of his Grammar a few months after its first publication, and had no farther concern with the sale. Mr Jameſon, the proprietor, published a second edition at four shillings, after Mr Shaw had *taken in* as many subscribers as he could at 10s. 6d.—If he expected sale for the Dictionary, it must have been in *England*; as he knew it could not sell where the language was *understood*.

We have seen, in every instance where Mr Shaw appeals to facts, he has been, on the most unquestionable evidence, completely convicted as an impostor and a violator of *truth*. But there is still another evidence, which we mean to adduce, whose testimony will not probably be taken on any other subject but on that under consideration. This evidence is Mr Shaw himself, whom we shall now call to the bar of the public.

SHAW *contra* SHAW.*Extracts from Mr Shaw's
Analysis.*

AN inundation of Barbarians from the northern parts overwhelmed the European continent. Letters, as affrighted, fled to the Hebrides and Ireland for an asylum, where they flourished for some centuries. P. vi.

There are not, however, wanting, at this day, proofs sufficient to shew the Gael were once a very considerable people. As late as the Roman invasion, all that part of Britain north of the Tweed and Solway Frith, with several counties of South Britain, and all Ireland, with the adjacent islands, was inhabited by the Gael. P. vii.

All charters, deeds, records, and laws, were now written in Latin or Scots. And the monasteries being pillaged by Edward, whatever was valuable in literature was entirely lost. Ireland, which hitherto was subjected by no foreign lord, nor distressed by the encroachments of a neighbouring state, except some temporary invasions by the Danes, quietly enjoyed the use of its laws, language, and liberties. It was at this juncture that the Irish Seanchies and annalists (when the Scots, having thrown off their extorted allegiance to England, their annals and records being irrecoverably destroyed by Edward, wished to have some account of their own origin) invented their hyperbolic and incredible Milesian expedition from Egypt and Spain to Ireland, and thence to Scotland by the promontories of Galloway and Cantire. Fordun, having no other materials, at once adopted this system, which gained universally in Scotland, un-

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*Extracts from Mr Shaw's
Inquiry.*

IN the mean time I did not forget MSS.—Since I could not find the poems in the mouths of the people, I concluded, if they existed at all, that Mr Macpherson must have found them in MSS. ; but as I knew the Earle was never written, I began to despair, and to doubt, P. 58.

By many it hath been said, that the families of Ossian are taken from so remote a period of society, as to be a strong proof of the antiquity of the poem. I grant the families in general are from nature. And why? Because the country described as the scene of action at this day, and its inhabitants, are in some degree but emerging from a state of nature. P. 29.

We will readily grant, that part of the contests in Ireland, and the war with Lochlin, is founded in history, because all the annals of Ireland have handed it down to us: but the author, in order to serve his purpose, wrests facts as they may best serve his end; and, apprehensive of a future detection, labours with great zeal to destroy the credit of all Irish history, and, with a few bold strokes of his pen, obliterate all the Celtic learning ever known any where, in order to make way for a new system of Celtic emigration and Hebridian and Fingalian history, in the Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland, of which

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SHAW *contra* SHAW.*Extracts from Mr Shaw's
Analysis.*

til the ingenious Mr Macpherson published his Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland. P. viii.

Though there were English colonies in Ireland, the Gael of that country enjoyed their own laws and customs till the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. when the English laws were universally established. This is the reason why the Ibero-Galic has more MSS. and books than the Caledonian. In Scotland there has been a general destruction of antient records and books, which Ireland has escaped. It enjoyed its own laws and language till a later date, whilst the Scots-English very early became the established language in North Britain. P. ix.

The improvement of the country, as well as the minds of the inhabitants, has been strangely neglected, in an age when every other country emerges from obscurity and ignorance, till some changes were forced upon them by a late law, I shall not say how politic. To see a people naturally capable of every improvement, though once misled by ignorance, stripped of their ancient habits and customs, and deprived of the Scriptures in their own tongue, the right of Christians, never denied to the most savage Indians, is at once a complication of inhumanity and imprudence. Better slay their bodies to secure their affections, as Rome was wont to do with heretics to bring their souls to heaven, than keep them in ignorance, with the expectation that, after some generations, the English manners, language, and improvements, may begin to dawn. At this day, there is no equal number of people in Britain so useful to the state. Upon every emergency they supply our navy with good seamen, and our armies with valiant

*Extracts from Mr Shaw's
Inquiry.*

nothing was heard before. This book was published on purpose to support the imposture of Fingal. P. 35.

No argument can be adduced in favour of Highland learning, from their ancient laws; for none, according to Mr Macpherson himself, ever existed, except the will of the chieftain, until some partial and faint influences of it were felt in the reign of the latter Jameses. Private property has not been legally ascertained until very lately; for the extent of a chief's territory depended on the number and valour of his vassals and followers. Hence it is, that few chieftains at this day can shew charters of any considerable date. P. 65.

In my tour in the Highlands, a respectable minister begged I would set about a translation of Fingal; and that he and others would undertake to prove it the composition of Ossian, and procure affidavits for that purpose. We need not, therefore, be surpris'd to hear the Highlanders confidently talk of their having seen and heard them repeated, although none can produce a specimen. But to persist in affirming that he has it, and publishing dissertations to prove it; to rail and abuse all who will not believe him, is an insult on the party, and a "degree of stubborn audacity the world has hitherto been unacquainted with."—It is the last subterfuge of guilt. The Highlanders and Scotch, very partial to their country and antiquities, although the translation might differ from what they might have heard repeated, would not take the trouble to detect it, as even that detection might be understood as an argument against their genuineness. They were glad of this new and unknown honour; and many of the

SHAW *contra* SHAW.*Extracts from Mr Shaw's
Analysis.*

liant soldiers. But strip them of their dress, language, the name and honour of Gael, and they soon degenerate. Their habit, language, life, and honour, they always kept or parted with at once. The honour of the name, their habit, and a Gaelic speech, have always inspired them more than the consecration of the colours. Government, by preserving these privileges, to them sacred as their *are & foci*, might have at least one part of the community, of whom they, on any emergency, might say with the Roman general, "I know the tenth legion will not desert me." P. xii.

On the Ibero-Galic there have been written grammars by different hands. The Scots and Irish Gaelic, though not radically different, are two separate dialects of the same language. The words are almost always the same, but differently orthographed. The Irish, in their grammars, have a more uncertain and various inflection in the termination, which the Scots Gaelic has not; and this inclines me to think the Scots is the original, and that this inflection of termination in Irish grammar is the mark of an attempt by the monks to polish it, after the manner of the Greek and Latin. Father O'Molloy published his *Grammatica Latina-Hibernica* in 12mo at Rome, 1677; and Macurtin, his *Elements of the Irish*, at Louvain, 1728: both of which merit only to be mentioned. P. xiii.

Unlike the Irish, the Scots Gaelic delights to pronounce every letter, and is not bristled over with so many

*Extracts from Mr Shaw's
Inquiry.*

of the names of the heroes in the poems being familiar to their ears, of which they had often heard mention made in the tales and fables of the Highlands in their youthful years, and, in some degree, at this day, could be easily led, by a little "Caledonian bigotry," not only to believe, but to vouch for their being a "literal translation." P. 71.

I am conscious, that, without a knowledge of Irish learning, we can know nothing of the Earle as a tongue, (the Irish being the studied language, and the Earle only a distant provincial dialect.) I cannot but express my astonishment at the arrogance of any man, who, to make way for the production of 1762, would destroy all the archives which the Irish, acknowledged by all the world to have been in the eighth century the most learned nation in Europe, have been for ages labouring to produce. When the Highlander knows nothing of Irish learning, he knows nothing of himself; and when Irish history is lost, Highland genealogy becomes very vague. The Irish had laws, many of which have come down to our own days, written in the ancient language. Fordun and Buchanan, although some centuries back, having no knowledge of their own origin, received the list of their ancient kings, as recorded in the *Chron. Scotorum*, and other Irish books. P. 62.

Thither (to Ireland) the youth of England, and other countries, went for education; and all the

S H A W contra S H A W.

*Extracts from Mr Shaw's
Analysis.*

many useleſs and quietſcent conſonants. The Engliſh and French are infinitely more difficult to read and pronounce, and have many more ſilent and mute letters. In the Gallic there are no ſuch ugly-looking words, as *thought, through, ſtrength,* &c. P. xv.

It was not the mercenary conſideration of intereſt, nor perhaps the expectation of fame among my countrymen, in whoſe eſteem its beauties are too much faded, but a taſte for the beauties of the original ſpeech of a now learned nation, that induced me either to begin, or encouraged me to perſevere. *Ibid.*

I beheld with aſtoniſhment the learned in Scotland, ſince the revival of letters, neglect the Galic; as if it was not worthy of any pen to give a rational account of a ſpeech uſed upwards of two thouſand years by the inhabitants of more than one kingdom. I ſaw, with regret, a language, once famous in the weſtern world, ready to periſh without any memorial, by the uſe of which Galgacus, having aſſembled his chiefs, rendered the Grampian hills impaſſable to legions that had conquered the world, and by which Fingal inſpired his warriors with the deſire of immortal fame. I wiſhed an account given to the world, of a language, thro' which, for ſo long a period, the benefits of knowledge, and the bleſſings of religion, were communicated to ſavage clans and roving barbarians, who, in paſt ages, becoming civilized,

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*Extracts from Mr Shaw's
Inquiry.*

popular ſtories of the Highlands at this day agree, that every chieftain went thither for education and the uſe of arms, from the fourth century until the Reformation. I-columkill was firſt founded by the munificence of the Iriſh; and all the abbots and monks belonging to it, one abbot only excepted, until its diſſolution, were Iriſh. All the Highland clergy not only ſtudied but received ordination in Ireland. The clergy of the Iſlands eſpecially, and thoſe of the weſtern coaſt, were frequently natives of Ireland. Hence it happens, that all the poetical compositions, ſtories, fables, &c. of any antiquity, which are repeated in the Highlands at this day, are confeſſedly in the Iriſh dialect. Whatever bards exiſted in the Highlands, received their education at the Iriſh academies; and every ſtanza that is remarkably fine or obſcure, is ſtill called *Galic dhoimhan Eirionnach*, i. e. *deep Iriſh*. P. 63.

Like a true Scotchman, in order to make his compoſition more acceptable to his countrymen, Mr Macpherſon changes the name of Fionn Mac Cumbal, the Iriſhman, into Fingal, which indeed ſounds much better; and ſets him up a Scotch king over the ideal kingdom of Morven, in the weſt of Scotland. —It had been a better argument for the authenticity, if he had allowed him to be an Iriſhman, and made Morven an Iriſh kingdom, as well as made Ireland the ſcene of his battles: but, as he muſt needs make the hero of an epic poem a great cha-

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SHAW *contra* SHAW.*Extracts from Mr Shaw's
Analysis.*

fung the praises of Him who taught both the tongue to sound, and the thoughts to soar, within the walls of the illustrious Iona. P. xvi.

An acquaintance with the Galic, being the mother-tongue of all the languages in the west, seems necessary to every Antiquary who would study the affinity of languages, or trace the migrations of the ancient races of mankind. Of late it has attracted the attention of the learned in different parts of Europe; and shall its beauties be neglected by those who have opportunities, from their infancy, of understanding it? Antiquity being the taste of the age, some acquaintance with the Galic begins justly to be deemed a part of the *Belles Lettres*. The language that boasts of the finished character of Fingal, must richly reward the curiosity of whoever studies it. Of this Sir James Foulis is a rare instance, who, in advanced years, has learned to read and write it; and now drinks of the Pierian spring untainted, by reading fragments of Poetry in Fingal's own language. P. xvii.

The richness of a language consists in the number of its primitives, and their capacity of various composition. The original simple principles of the Galic make it far excel any of the modern, and rival the most ancient languages. The little variegated flexion of its nouns and verbs, which is peculiar to itself, and the abundance of its compositions, render it capable of beautifully describing and expressing the emotions of the mind, without the aid of foreign words; hence it is, that the illiterate peasant on the hills of Scotland, having, in his infancy, had his mind stored with a certain number of primitives and their

*Extracts from Mr Shaw's
Inquiry.*

character, it was too great honour for any other country but Scotland to have given birth to so considerable a personage. P. 34.

Names are quoted who have given the originals.—Some of those I am acquainted with; and none of them (for nobody could be more diligent and inquisitive than I have been) could ever produce any thing but a few scattered fabulous stanzas, sometimes representing the heroes as men, at other times as giants; sometimes probable, and often marvellous; none of which can bear a translation.—All they (the Highlanders) could repeat was nothing but a few fabulous and marvellous verses, or stories concerning Fionn Mac Cumhal, alias Fingal, and his Fiona or followers, chasing each other from island to island, striding from mountain to mountain, or crossing a frith at a hop, with the help of his spear. There was much of enchantments, fairies, goblins, incantations, rhimes, and the second-sight. When I heard those of one country, I heard all; for they all repeated in general the same stories: and when I had the narration of a few, I had every thing. P. 57.

I can shew, from the language of religion, for although Earle was never the vehicle of learning, and fierce chieftains would not submit to civil government, yet religion, blended with superstition, was in some degree acknowledged by them, nay, from even the stile of the pulpit at present in the Highlands, and the few books of piety they have lately published, that the Irish Galic was the language of law, divinity, and poetry. The common Catechism, the Confession of Faith, the version of the Psalms sung in churches, are written in Irish; and the language of the minister when he preacheth, and the extemporaneous

SHAW *contra* SHAW.*Extracts from Mr Shaw's
Analysis.*

their different modes of inflection, by an easy, though a various combination with a certain number of particles, speaks his language with elocution, a natural Demosthenes; and there is no word in the language, however compounded, but he understands. Neither is this language deficient in the terms of art. In Ethics, Jurisprudence, Theology, and Natural History, words are not wanting to express our thoughts, and to instruct others: even in Mathematics, and Natural Philosophy in all its parts, terms can easily be rendered from the Greek into the Gaelic, by decomposing them in the original, and then translating and joining them afresh; an advantage of which no modern language is possessed. P. cxi.

Sounds are either quick or slow, rough or smooth, strong or feeble. From the various modifications of these in a language, may, perhaps, be discovered, the manners, the temperament, and feelings of a people, at the time of its formation. The Gael, when their language was formed, seem to have been in that state of society, when the arts of peace and war were not entirely strangers; when it was an approved maxim, to "bind the strong in arms, but spare the feeble hand; be a stream of many tides against the foes of thy people, but like the gale that moves the grafs to those who ask thy aid." — *Parcere subjeclis, debellare superbis*. Such was the genius of the language in the days of Trenmor and of Fingal; and even now it is the most suited either to rouse the soul to feats of arms, or inspire pity in the relentless breast;

"To soften rocks, and bend the knotted oak." P. cxxvii.

No language is more susceptible of

*Extracts from Mr Shaw's
Inquiry.*

neous effusion of the peasant's prayer, border upon it. As they received in the Highlands their knowledge of the Christian religion from Icolmkill, and Icolmkill from Ireland, all the terms in divinity are immediately Irish, and in the remote parts of the Highlands, at this day, not well understood. The Earse dialect is rather barren of words, having never been cultivated; and the preacher that introduceth any idea beyond the Calvinistic system, is difficultly understood.—It will be in vain to reason abstractedly, even on morality; and the audience, not only strangers to the sentiment, but even to the expression, cannot always comprehend the speaker. P. 65.

When I asked, and particularly those who were possessed of any poetry, songs, or tales, who Fionn was?—for he is not known by the name of Fingal by any—I was answered, that he was an Irishman, if a man; for they sometimes thought him a giant, and that he lived in Ireland, and sometimes came over to hunt in the Highlands. This is the universal voice of all the Highlanders, excepting those who are possessed of abilities and knowledge to peruse the work of Mr Macpherson, and are taught by nationality to support an idle controversy.

In the *Chronicon Scotorum*, from which the list of the Scotch kings is taken, and the pretended manuscripts they so much boast of to be seen

SHAW *contra* SHAW.*Extracts from Mr Shaw's
Analyſis.*

of rhyme than the Galic: it is not, like the Greek and Latin, chained to certain terminations, which reſuſe rhyme; but at once admits of all the variety of ancient and modern verſification. Final rhyme in Galic does not conſiſt in terminations of ſimilar letters, but in the laſt ſtrongly pronounced vowel or diphthong in a word. P. cxxix.

The Galic poetry, unlike the Engliſh, which is generally confined to diſyllables and monosyllables, admits of words of any length. Galic poets never yet wrote by any other rule than the ear, and certain pieces of muſic; and for that reaſon, though we may eaſily ſee what ſort of meaſure each piece delights in, the uniformity of the ſame number of ſimilar meaſures in every line does not always return. P. cxxx.

The meaſure of Oſſian's poetry is very irregular and various. Generally he has couplets of eight, though they do not rhyme, and ſeven, and ſometimes nine ſyllables. Theſe feet are moſt commonly trochee and daſtyle. The trochee occupies the firſt, daſtyle the ſecond and third, and a long ſyllable ends the line.

After what has been ſaid, it is doubtful whether the following paragraph of Mr Shaw's pamphlet, ought to be read with more ſurpriſe or contempt. It is taken verbatim from p. 37. where he ſays, "*I never yet could diſſemble nor perſonate a hypocrite**.—"*Truth has always been dearer to me than my country.*" I can ſhow Dr Johnson, that there is one Scotch-
" man

*Extracts from Mr Skaw's
Inquiry.*

ſeen in the Hebrides, there is not one ſyllable ſaid of ſuch a name as Fingal. A man ſo thirſty after fame, would ſurely court an opportunity of meeting the cotemporary Romans, who certainly would not fail to make mention of ſo great a hero. P. 35.

It is impoſſible, if ever they exiſted, that the bards and others, who could write, within theſe three laſt centuries, ſhould not have collected them. Whatever ſongs and episodes Oſſian ſung, did not long ſurvive himſelf; and it was difficult for former bards to anticipate the compositions of the age of chivalry. P. 61.

All the Highlands has not yet been able to ſhew three lines, excepting thoſe Mr Macpherson publiſhed as a ſpecimen, and which, in reality, in his own tranſlation. If they believe themſelves, let them enjoy it, and not attempt to bully the world into a belief of that for which no ſort of evidence has yet been produced.

* "A man may ſmile, and ſmile, and be a villain. SHAKESPEARE.

“ man who loves *truth* better than his country, and
 “ that I am a sturdy enough moralist to declare it.”

The few following vocables, being among the simples and most generally understood, are given from Mr Shaw's Dictionary, vol. ii. (English and Gaelic), as a specimen of his boasted knowledge of the Celtic. The *English* reader has no occasion to trust to the justice of my translations of Mr Shaw's Gaelic vocables back into English. Let him turn up Shaw, vol. i. (Gaelic and English); and he will see these words bear the identical meaning which I have given them. Let him look for MERIT in vol. ii. and among the vocables said to explain it in Gaelic, he will find DUAIS. Let him look for *Duais* in the first volume, and he will find the English to be a *reward*: and so of all the rest.

<i>English.</i>	<i>Mr Shaw's trans- lation.</i>	<i>Genuine translation of Mr Shaw's Gaelic.</i>
Oozy	<i>Salach</i>	Dirty.
Merit	<i>Duais</i>	A reward
Novice	<i>Brathair og eaglis</i>	A young brother of the church.
Ox	<i>Bo</i>	A cow.
Possession	<i>Ceart</i>	Just.
Adviseable	<i>Glic</i>	Wife, knowing.
Prize	<i>Creach</i>	Plunder.
A flat	<i>Air an talabb</i>	On the ground.
Wearing	<i>Aodach</i>	Cloth.
Wash	<i>Bog</i>	Soft, penetrable,
Upon	<i>Aird</i>	High.
Vapour	<i>Gal</i>	Weeping.
Vacant	<i>Saor</i>	Free.
Swift	<i>Eatrom</i>	Light.
Spirit	<i>Anal</i>	Breath.
Signal	<i>Dealbh</i>	A picture.
Pit	<i>Deirc</i>	Alms.
Outside	<i>An leathamach</i>	The out half.
Offence	<i>Scannal</i>	Slander.
Mood	<i>Crioch</i>	End, conclusion.

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Though the hurry of avocations, more important to me than a detection of Mr Shaw, has induced me to be very brief in discussing the subject, I fear the reader will think, that more than enough to confute my antagonist has been already written. But every day that I delay the publication, brings new matter to my hands. Since my design has become known, I have had several intimations relative to the strange conduct and unequalled absurdity of Mr Shaw, during his *investigating peregrination*, to use the words of his patron, through the Highlands of Scotland. This subject, however, is too mean in itself, and too uninteresting to the public, to merit their attention. It is sufficient to observe, that it would be difficult to distinguish, whether our Inquirer's vanity or his folly was greatest. In places where he was not known, at least where *he* thought he was not known, he endeavoured to pass for a man of fortune, who was making a tour of pleasure. Where men were no strangers to his situation, he became a suppliant for subscriptions to his Dictionary; thus assuming the character of gentleman and beggar, as best suited his vanity or his necessities. In some places, however, what may be near the truth came out; where he acknowledged that he was travelling the Highlands, at the expence of some persons in England, to gather facts and arguments against the authenticity of Ossian's Poems. Though nothing our author says is to be implicitly taken for truth, there is an appearance of it in what has been last mentioned. Though his expences could not have been great, and the horses he so often and so pompously mentioned were only Highland *ponies*, it cannot be supposed, that from the
wretched

wretched stipend allowed to him as a private tutor, he could have defrayed those expences, small as they might have been. There is therefore reason to believe, that another *great writer* loosed his purse-strings for our author, upon the above occasion. There was the more need for this seasonable aid, as the disagreeable manner of our traveller disgusted the people in general; and made them, with regard to him, depart from the characteristic hospitality of their country. To the inferior sort, who are by nature polite and affable to strangers, his forward presumption became intolerable; and their aversion to him and his inquiries, was much heightened, by the strange and unintelligible gibberish which he spoke, under the name of *Gaelic*.

No wonder, therefore, that they were so uncommunicative with respect to a man, whom they disliked for his manner, and despised for his ignorance.

Doctor Johnson, somewhere in the *RAMBLER*, advises his reader, when he wishes to know a man's private character, to apply to his servants. John Stewart, who attended Mr Shaw through the Highlands in that capacity, is at present hair-dresser to a friend of mine. I inquired if he remembered of his master creeping on all fours into houses in the Highlands? He mentioned two instances as the only ones he could point out. He said they were obliged to creep into Mr Shaw's father's in the isle of Arran: The other instance, I forbear to mention, as it would add no lustre to Mr Shaw's character as a *clergyman*. I am well aware of the censure I may meet with, even from the humane and liberal, for throwing out this insinuation against Mr Shaw, on
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account of his original obscurity. My benevolence is particularly hurt, while justice to my country compels my hand to draw the picture: But a man brought up in one of the humblest cottages in the Highlands, might have even deigned to enter others equally low, without any national reflections. This observation flows not from that arrogance, with which assuming wealth exults over the sons of misery and distress. To convince Mr Shaw how little I would have considered his poverty as a *stigma*, had he acted the part of an honest man, I scruple not to inform him, that my own family, during the lifetime of my father, was reduced from a state of opulence, to a situation nearly equal to his own.

I inquired at the same John Stewart as to the amazing sums of money which Mr Shaw talks of having spent for snuff, whisky, &c. in the Highlands. As to the snuff, he declares it did not cost Mr Shaw one penny. Whisky and money, given for information, he believes, could not exceed two guineas; at least he can depone that it was within three; as he used generally to tell the people, after they had recited their poems, and he had taken them down in writing, that they had no merit, and therefore he would give them nothing for their trouble. Mr Shaw says, he made offer to Professor Macleod of so many half-crowns; I wish he had remembered another person who stood *far more* in need of them, and had surely a *prior claim* upon Mr Shaw. This poor fellow wore his cloaths in Mr Shaw's service, who had the *immorality* * to defraud

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him

* 'I am a sturdy enough moralist,' Page 37.

him of his wages, of which he has never yet received one shilling. Mr Shaw's pretence for this fraud was, that the servant lost a pair of stockings out of his pocket in passing to one of the isles.

But it is now high time to dismiss this disagreeable subject. The strictures I have made may perhaps be thought severe, though just. But our author, by infamously traducing the characters of others, deprived himself of every kind of title to any lenity with respect to his own. His disregard to that common veracity, which prudence suggests, where principle fails, has been detected, exposed, and deservedly reprobated, in the course of these pages. If the language used has been sometimes harsh, the reader must ascribe that circumstance to a warmth of temper, in which an honest indignation rises against every breach of truth.

Mr Shaw merits nothing, perhaps, beyond a contemptuous silence, or, at most, that pointed ridicule which cuts deeper than serious refutation. But had I even any talents for the former, the latter had become necessary, as I was grossly and publicly attacked by a man to whom I had been civil, if not friendly, in private life.

*** Mr Shaw's Letters to the author, mentioned page 20. were written after he had performed his perambulation through the Highlands, and after his pretended conviction of the imposture of Ossian's Poems.

F I N I S.

